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126
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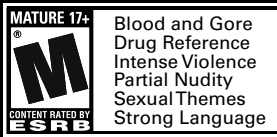
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JUAN MACLEAN, SHOT IN NEW HAMPSHIRE BY JOSHI RADIN.



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ED'S RANT: More Fire



The studio where The Prodigy made *Invaders Must Die*.

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ON THE COVER

The Prodigy, shot in London by Paul Dugdale.

FEATURED TYPEFACE

Designed for XLR8R by HI.

I first saw The Prodigy in 1993 on the Rave New World tour with Moby and Cybersnik, the nascent techno project of Richie Hawtin, John Acquaviva, and Dan Bell. I think it's fair to say that nothing has been the same since. As my mom sat outside in car for three hours, pissed off, I waited for The Prodigy to go on, and their explosive live show proceeded to convince me that rave was the zeitgeist to which I needed to belong. A lot has happened in music in the 18 years since the band has formed, but it's safe to say that—with the exception of more lights, newer songs, and studded belts instead of crazy black-and-white jumpsuits—The Prodigy still boasts one of the best live shows our digital culture has to offer.

And so, on a bright and cold London morning, I stepped off a plane at Heathrow and took the Tube straight to interview the band in Ladbroke Grove, a London neighborhood whose collection of reggae and rare-groove record shops, market stalls selling mix CDs and streetwear, and traditional British pubs is the very reflection of the band's influences. For nearly two hours, we talked about the making of their new album, their struggles as a band, and their love of The Specials. Despite fame and its temptations, not that much has changed—they're very much the same three Essex boys, in love with hard-hitting tunes and a good dance.

While The Prodigy has spent their career honing a singular sound, pioneer Terre Thaemlitz has spent the last 15 years nurturing and incubating a million ideas through every niche of

electronic beats, from mellow ambient textures to pure, jacking house. Whether in or out of drag, Thaemlitz is a true provocateur, using words and music to form a picture of his personal trip through dance-music culture. Upon the release of his latest album, *Midtown 120 Blues*, editor Ken Taylor wrangled with a 17-hour time difference as he coordinated an interview with Thaemlitz (alias DJ Sprinkles) from his home in Japan.

You may be getting the picture by now, but this month's magazine is full of strong personalities. For Vis-Ed, we talked to artist Clare Rojas about her work, which redefines folk art while simultaneously flipping the script on misogynists everywhere. If you run into her in San Francisco, make sure you ask her if you can buy some "Club Monaco," her penis-and-balls-shaped surf wax. (And you think I'm kidding...) Unabashed disco lover The Juan MacLean comes clean about his influences, while Tim Exile puts his breakcore hat in storage to make a fantastic synth-pop record. We tramped through the snow in Norway to survey the landscape of Scandinavian pop bands (sitting through some horrible Shaun Ryder impersonations and songs about Skeletor along the way), got tropical with Radioclit, and found out what's what from reclusive Detroit house don Omar S. You'll find exclusive podcasts, MP3s, and more info from these interviews online at XLR8R.com.

So what are you waiting for? Go start some fires.

— Vivian Host, Editor-in-Chief

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Jon Hopkins

Insides

" [*Insides*] is a stunning effort that invigorates so-called downtempo music with crunchy electronic undertones. Melodic numbers like "Vessel" and "Wire" truly soar, yet retain some real teeth with beats that recall Aphex Twin's tougher offerings." — *XLR8R*

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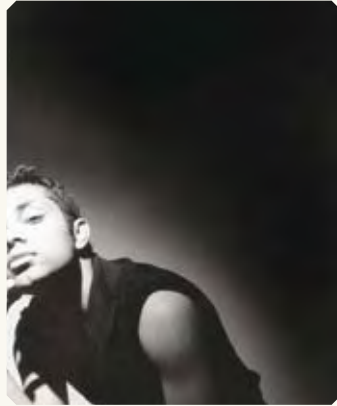
www.myanimalhome.net

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Walter Wasacz

Walter Wasacz is a freelance writer based in Hamtramck, Michigan, a small city within the city of Detroit where Arabic, Bengali, Polish, Serbo-Croatian, punk rock, post-industrial noise, and techno dread are as often heard on the street as English. He writes a column on club culture ("The Subterraneans") for the *Detroit Metro Times*, has recently contributed to *The Wire* and *De:Bug*, and is an editor for online weekly pub *Model D*. For this issue, he tracked down hard-to-find, funky dub-house don Omar S.



Shiraz Ansari

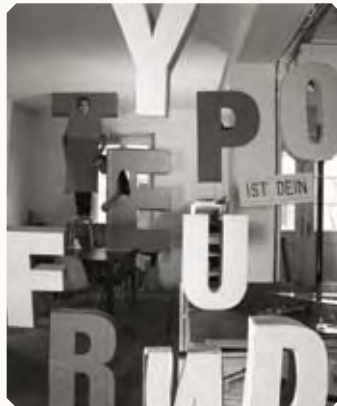
Originally from Pakistan and raised in the U.S., Shiraz Ansari is a self-taught fashion and lifestyle photographer based in New York City. Specializing in shooting youth and its cultures, Ansari's work has appeared in such international publications as *Trace*, *Baby Boy*, *ReFresh*, *Slurp*, and *Pref*, amongst others. His work has been described as sexy, raw, classic, romantic, and a bit dangerous. His photographs for this issue's True Colors style shoot are his first for *XLR8R*.

shirazansari.com



Lulu McAllister

Lulu McAllister has spent half of her life on the East Coast and half out West. As a recent Media Studies graduate from the University of San Francisco, her work as appeared in *XLR8R* and *Performer* magazines in addition to various high-school and college publications. When she is not writing music reviews or updating *XLR8R.com*, she can be found creating short documentary films on topics like graphic t-shirt design and foraging for mushrooms.



Hi

Lucerne, Switzerland-based design firm Hi was founded by Megi Zumstein and Claudio Barandun in 2007, but the pair has been collaborating for almost 10 years. "It's often very inspiring," says Zumstein. "You really act in concert, but obviously you never stop working—you start talking about work at the breakfast table." They share a studio with a photographer and illustrator, but their interests are widespread beyond visual art (Barandun plays in the band Transmartha, and Zumstein plays sax). The outdoorsy couple created this issue's featured typeface.

hi-web.ch

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XLR8R TV



WORLD OF RHYTHMS

Last month, our friends at Ghostly International celebrated their 10th anniversary with a huge label package tour. On their San Francisco stop, we had the pleasure of speaking with Chicago-based techno queen and Ghostly signee **Kate Simko** before her smoking-hot set. But the beats don't stop there, as we also caught up with world traveler and sound surveyor DJ /rupture about his never-ending quest for the perfect beat, and had to Oakland-based Anticon staples Jel and Odd Nosdam create a tune in one afternoon.

See all the madness at XLR8R.com/tv, and come back every Tuesday for new episodes, including recent shows with BBC DJ Mary Anne Hobbs and photographer Brian McCarty.

NEW CONTENT EVERY DAY AT XLR8R.COM

Check out music news and features, free MP3 downloads, and reviews updated every day, plus photo blogs, music videos, free PDF versions of *XLR8R*, and a whole lot more at XLR8R.com.

PODCAST

JUAN MACLEAN GETS PERSONAL.



John "Juan" MacLean is first and foremost a record geek. In this issue of *XLR8R*, he tells us all about the artists that influenced his new album, and for this very special podcast he gets even more personal, pulling out obscure favorites from his growing crates of vinyl. As well, in the Studio stars Radioclit give us a firsthand listen to the tropical bass tunes they've been dropping in their incendiary DJ sets. Read about the French-Swedish duo's African-influenced productions, and then check out their killer remixes and edits in this month's podcast section!

To get your weekly dose of *XLR8R*'s favorite music, sign up for our podcast at XLR8R.com, where we feature exclusive mixes from all across the spectrum, including new sets from Jahdan Blakkamoore and Commix.

XLR8R.COM/PODCAST



JANUARY/ FEBRUARY NO.124

Pics and video from Red Bull Music Academy Barcelona

Interview excerpts with Zomby

MP3 downloads from Luomo, Mr. Oizo, and Lazer Sword

XLR8R TV episode with The Glitch Mob

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MARCH NO.125

Cinematic inspirations from The Junior Boys

Extended interview between Pop Levi and Sparks

XLR8R TV episodes with Dan Deacon, Black Milk, Arnaud Rebotini, and Mi Ami

An exclusive Circlesquare podcast

More from our Primary fashion shoot

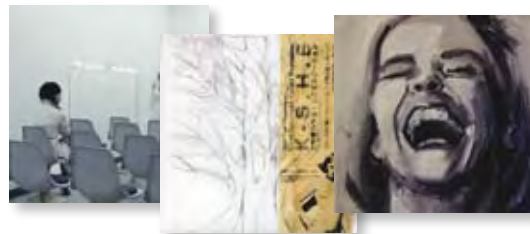
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LOOK FOR THE XLR8R.COM EXTRAS ICON

This issue is filled with online extras, including extended interviews, photo outtakes, audio clips, and videos. See them at

XLR8R.COM/126EXTRAS



XLR8R's "Under the Influence" Contest

Bare your soul for a grip of new music from The Prodigy, The Juan MacLean, and Terre Thaemlitz.

In this issue, we do a lot of delving into the pasts of our favorite artists. The Juan MacLean rattles off more than a few of the folks that have impacted their recent album, Terre Thaemlitz provides a unique secret history of underground house, and the three men known as The Prodigy consider their own past, going from breakbeat hardcore enthusiasts to one of the world's top-grossing electronica acts. Now it's your turn to divulge your past: We want to hear about the artists that have had the biggest impact on

your life. If your entry is the most convincing, you'll score a special prize pack that includes vinyl and CDs from The Prodigy, copies of Terre Thaemlitz's albums as K-S.H.E. (*Routes Not Roots*; Comantone) and DJ Sprinkles (*Midtown 120 Blues*; Mule Musiq), and The Juan MacLean's *The Future Will Come* (DFA/Astralwerks) on CD.

To win, tell us in under 200 words which musical artist has had the most impact on your life, and how. The most interesting answers will receive the prizes below.

One grand-prize winner will receive: A deluxe CD and vinyl package from The Prodigy, including *Invaders Must Die*, plus copies of *Routes Not Roots*, *Midtown 120 Blues*, and *The Future Will Come* on CD.

Three runners-up will receive: A copy of *Routes Not Roots*, *Midtown 120 Blues*, *The Future Will Come*, and *Invaders Must Die* on CD.

Entries will be accepted via standard mail and email, and must be received by May 30, 2009. Send your entry to: XLR8R's Under the Influence Contest, 3180 18th St. #303, San Francisco, CA 94110 or email contest@xlr8r.com with "XLR8R's Under the Influence Contest" in the subject line.

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ATMOSPHERE "GODLOVESUGLY" - CD+DVD / 2LP+DVD (Re-Issue)
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BROTHER ALI "THE TRUTH IS HERE" - CD+DVD / 2LP+DVD
9 previously unreleased and new tracks from **Ali & Ant** to hold your over until the new album drops Fall '09. Also includes a full-length DVD featuring the Sold Out homecoming performance from *The Undisputed Truth Tour* at First Avenue, as well as bonus commentary and music videos.

IN STORES 3.10.09

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ABSTRACT RUDE "REJUVENATION" - CD / 2LP
West coast legend, ATU, Massmen, Project Blowed, Haiku D'Etat, and A-Team affiliate **Abstract Rude** re-emerges with *Rejuvenation*. Produced entirely by Seattle super producer **Vitamin D** (*G-Unit*, *Redman*, *Gift of Gab*, etc.) *Rejuvenation* is a hard hitting soulful ryde showcasing Ab Rude's distinct and unlimited vocal stylings.

IN STORES 5.05.09

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BJ "Bitter" Bastard's

Wastin' Time on the Web

Nothing makes the days—oh, what the hell... years!—fly by unnoticed like back-to-back hours spent on ye olde interweb. Where else can you mail-order lobsters, send an elf greeting card for free, hang out with all your friends, flirt with Estonian pre-teens, and slay monsters of the future all without leaving your chair? (Have you looked at your butt lately?) And social networking only makes the siren song of WiFi that much more beguiling. Here's Bitter Bastard's guide to the most pernicious sites on the 'net, written at one a.m. (natch).



1. Bank of America
An entire 20 minutes can be spent here blankly staring at the screen, wondering how your bank account balance can read \$27.35 while your credit-card balance reads \$9,824.20. I think I just grew a new wrinkle.



2. MySpace
Hmm, somehow over the course of the last two months I've become "friends" with a lot of amateur porn stars, SoCal rap-rock outfits, Asian import car models, and gay Midwestern teens. Which would be fine if they weren't always leaving me weird animated GIFs and trying to make me come see their band.



4. Muppet Wiki
Of all the ways I like to relive the past while shamelessly frittering away valuable work time, this is my favorite. How else would I have ever known the proclivities and political viewpoints of Sam the Eagle, or about Lew Zealand, the boomerang fish thrower? See also He-Man wiki and Marvel Comics character list.



5. I Can Has Cheezburger?
It's stunning how much time humans can spend looking at cute things acting dumb. This phenomenon explains *America's Funniest Videos*, Jessica Simpson, and how some of my friends can stay with their girlfriends. But nothing really explains why I forgot to eat lunch because I was too busy looking at "stalkercat make spy on da ladeez."



From: Lisa
Send Me Cupcakes



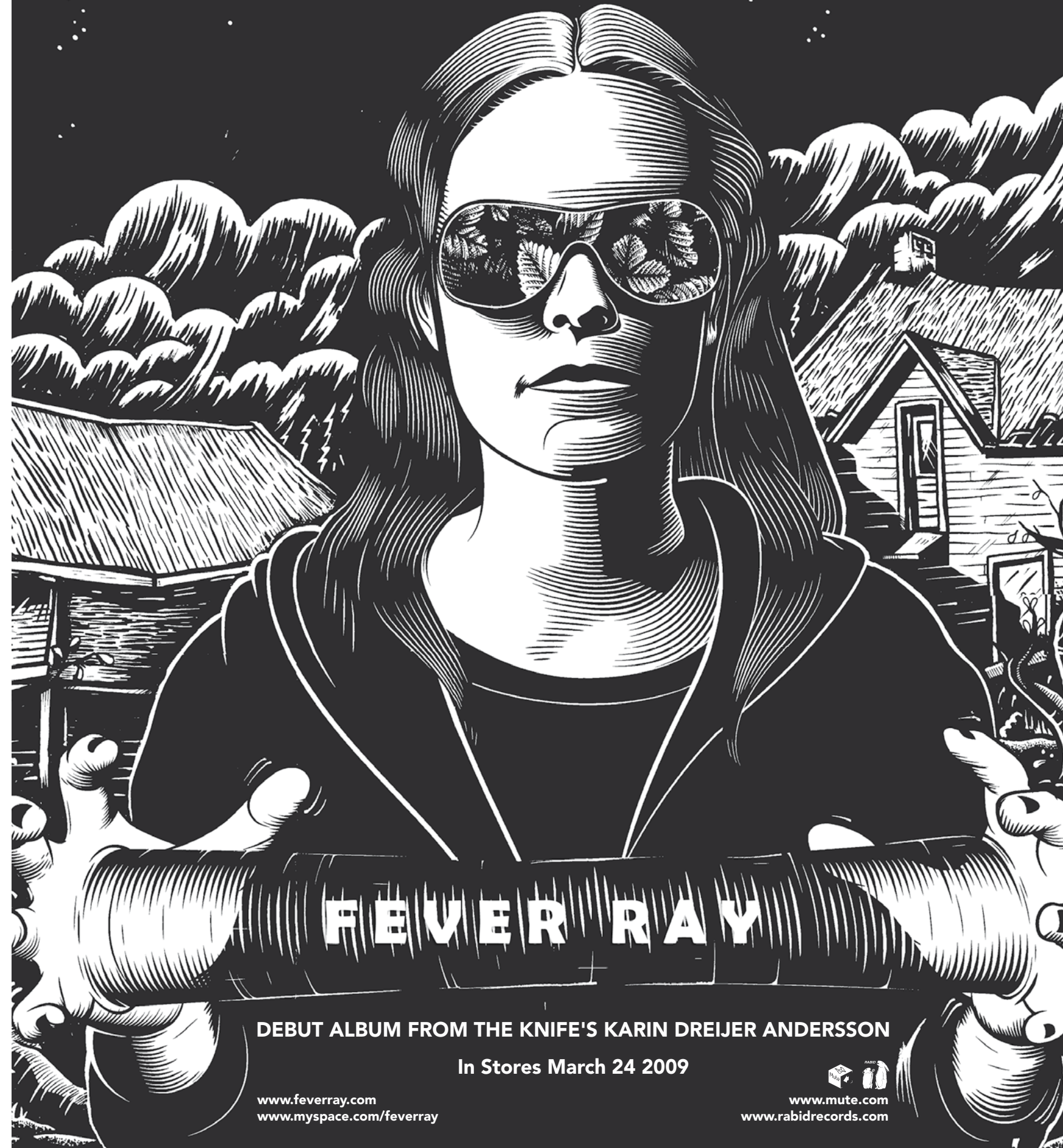
7. Twitter
Sometimes I take really crazy S-shaped shits and I feel the urge to call all my friends and tell them about it. Now that I have Twitter I can just do a status update, and since I did a status update from White Castle three hours before everyone will know exactly why!



8. YouTube
Thanks to YouTube I have seen creepy dancing Indian midgets, and who knows how many homemade black-kid booty-shake videos. Thanks a lot.



9. Astrology Zone
Astrologer Susan Miller is a real fave among the office gal pals. She is so in touch with the universe's vibrations that she can actually hear Saturn and Neptune talking to one another! Right now, I'm doing nothing until Mercury stops being in retrograde, and it turns out I have a rare, monumental opposition to Uranus.



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Omar S

Finally bubbling up from the underground, a reclusive Detroit house head gets his due.

The man known as Omar S, buried so deep in the underground for the past decade that few in the Detroit technopolis have seen him or know how to find him, is inching toward the surface.

Suddenly, the cagey, reclusive, combative, and calculatedly funny Alex Omar Smith is virtually everywhere, granting interviews to journalists representing magazines he's never heard of, getting chunks of the huge catalog of his homegrown FXHE label distributed on Beatport, recording new tunes, engineering others' tracks, and releasing re-worked versions of his largely unknown classics to the world via London's Fabric mix CD series.

In print, Smith comes off like a mean ol' nasty bastard—profane and bitter, he bitches about the desperate state of club music, not just in Detroit but all across the USA. He rarely plays in his hometown and says flat-out he would reject an invitation to play at Movement, the city's annual electronic music festival. "Fuck no to that," he offers. "If they haven't invited me already, I don't need 'em. They can go to hell."

But smiles and chuckles emerge after Smith's little tantrums, which he says he uses to get a rise out of people and wake them up. "People have become so arrogant, you can't tell them shit," he says. "They won't respond to anything different unless you fuck with their heads with some off-the-wall shit. I need to do my own hype, man."

Get him talking about what inspired him to create his own personal sound factory in a modest house on Detroit's far north side and he gushes like a little kid. Smith grew up in nearby Conant Gardens, an extraordinary square-mile area that produced such talents as Amp Fiddler, Slum Village, Frank-n-Dank, and Platinum Pied Pipers. As a youth, he was thrilled to the marrow by Detroit's rich musical legacy.

"Man, it was Motown and Levi Stubbs—may he rest in peace—the greatest voice ever produced in Detroit," says Smith about the Four Tops' singer. "It was P-Funk and Prince ... then Inner City, 'Big Fun.' Before Basic Channel it was Kevin Saunderson and [late mastering engineer] Ron Murphy that started all that dub [techno] shit."

He says it like he knows it, because he does. He was there—he refuses to say how old he is ("Just write, 'Between 20 and 40'")—in the '90s at Detroit house parties, getting schooled on the dancefloor by Kenny Dixon Jr., Theo Parrish, Scott Grooves, and Mike Huckaby, processing drums, basslines, and melodies in his head, plotting new directions for the psychedelic soul-funk tech-house dubs of the future. What would emerge were tracks like "Just Ask the Lonely," an homage to Motown joy and melancholy delivered as an exhilarating 10-minute rhythmic skip overlaid with gorgeous jazz piano riffs; or the spacier, tougher "Blade Runner," which suggests the science-fiction fetish of the electro-fied 1980s without appearing dated.

Along the way he became a guardian angel to young (Seth Troxler, Luke Hess) and neglected (Malik Pittman) local talents who, like himself, have had to find love and respect far from the city that shaped their sound.

Why is that, Alex? What makes Detroit the fucked-up, schizoid, yet uniquely innovative musical incubator that it is?

"Oh, I don't know, man," he says, laughing. "That's a Derrick May question. I can't answer that. Ask him. I just do what I do."

DVD

Field Studies



A new DVD takes an audio-visualist's approach to Rothko and Newman.



A still from Ryoichi Kurokawa's "Scorch."

The **Color Field movement**, defined by abstract canvases featuring broad fields of solid color, flourished in the post-war era of the 1940s and '50s. Inspired by European modernism and closely mirroring the works of artists like Mark Rothko, Clyfford Still, and Barnett Newman, the Color Field movement was born when artists began to break away from the gesture and angst of abstract expressionism, opting instead to examine the subtleties of clear surfaces and pure color.

Fast-forward about 50 years to a new DVD released by Taylor Deupree's minimalist label Line. The limited-to-1000 *Colorfield Variations* (Line;

\$22) takes Color Field's central ideas and reinterprets them with stunning audio-visual mood pieces created by a host of critically acclaimed artists from all across the globe. Wonderfully assembled by curator and sound artist Richard Chartier, the DVD is an excellent way for viewers to absorb the Color Field movement from all spectrums—from the warm and milky deluge of vibrant oranges and reds bleeding into one another in Steve Roden's 13-minute "Dark Over Light Earth" to the three-dimensional world of skittering neon blocks in Tina Frank and General Magic's "Chronomops."

The music accompanying each of

the pieces comes from a wide array of experimental sounds, from drone and ambient to the clicks, gurgles, and pops of borderline-IDM. Ryoichi Kurokawa's masterpiece "Scorch" blends blurred, *origami*-like geometry in pinks, pastels, and carnation colors to a fuzzy, ambient soundscape. Crinkly shapes multiply like bacteria on a microscope lens, crunching and fizzling as new transparent bodies dissolve and reappear over them.

"Chronomantic Redux," by Throbbing Gristle members Chris Carter and Cosey Fanni Tutti, is another beauty, both aurally and visually. During the piece, a giant block of rich red inches down the screen to what sounds like an orchestra

conducted by ghosts. As more classical-sounding instrumentation makes its way into the thick blanket of drone and whirl, the red block becomes textured and flows like debris slithering across an ocean floor.

In college, I used to enjoy sitting in my dorm room on acid, staring at a blue TV screen while Roni Size or the *Pi* soundtrack boomed in the background. *Colorfield Variations* reminds me of those days, as it's a great (non-narcotic) way to get lost in beautiful sights and sounds. *Chris Sabbath*

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Tim Exile

Living in self-imposed exile from drill 'n' bass, a modern mystic refashions himself as an electro-pop crooner.



Tim Exile used to be known as a junglist, a crafter of twitchy breakcore that could decorate a dancefloor like splattered paint. His catalog of tracks spans across labels such as Moving Shadow, Evol Intent, Distinct'ive Breaks, and Planet Mu, the latter of which issued his *Pro Agonist* and *Tim Exile's Nuisance Gabbaret Lounge* records.

But his latest album, *The Listening Tree*, finds the producer (born Tim Shaw) taking a different path. "There are a few strands that run through [the album]," Shaw explains via phone from his current base in Berlin. "One of them is kinda like personal breakthrough and transcending. And another one is frustration with society and also with myself, I guess. There's a nerve between myself, my fears, anxieties and hopes, and how they're mirrors of how I see society."

A meditation on humanism and technology in the spirit of Thomas Dolby's *The Golden Age of*

Wireless and Depeche Mode's *Black Celebration*, *The Listening Tree* features dramatic, synth-infused introspection on "Don't Think We're One" and the title track, where Exile compares one's inner conscience to a mystic tree of life. The centerpiece is the amazing "Family Galaxy," which speeds and slows tempos, working up to a maddening breakneck pace as Exile sings, "Family galaxy wants you to come and play and change every day/Come and play in the stars/They're all ours."

"[The songs] also reflect a fantasy of what it'd be like if we all broke free," he says. "I'm a big believer in the transformational power of technology if it's put to good use."

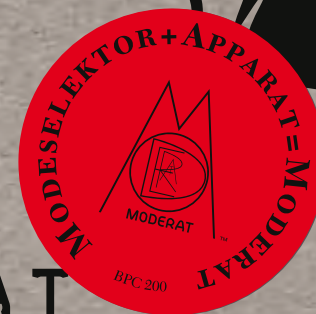
The Listening Tree may seem like a pagan metaphor for God, but it's not. Shaw, a native of London, remembers singing in the church choir as a youth, but doesn't consider himself a Christian. "I think I was there more in mind than

in spirit," he jokes. As a teenager, his girlfriend at the time converted him to a form of New Age Christianity "for about six months, until I realized how crazy it was."

Exile professes not to practice any religion, yet definitely comes off as a seeker of some greater purpose, spiritual or otherwise. If there's any common ground between the high-minded, song-based progressivism of *The Listening Tree* and the hard-stepping gabba of his prior work, it's that both flip through musical styles quickly while retaining a melodic, accessible core.

"All I have is a conscious flow of consciousness that ties my previous albums to now. It's quite a good illustration of how quickly the flow of consciousness changes for me," says the 30-year-old Exile. "I guess it's the process of getting old and wanting to do things differently."

• *The Listening Tree* is out now on Warp.
myspace.com/timexile



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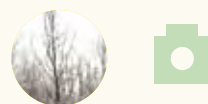
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FESTIVAL

Ring the Alarm



Six of the best new bands we saw at Oslo's **By:Larm** music festival.



Oslo is a cool port city where rockabilly still thrives, disco is *de rigueur*, and you might find whale or reindeer on the menu. It's here in Norway's capital that the festival By:Larm (pronounced "BEE-larm") has settled, after 11 years of traveling around the country. Each February, By:Larm puts together a sort of SXSW-style survey of the best up-and-coming Scandinavian bands. Smartly, most of the clubs are clustered in the same five-block radius, making it actually possible to catch back-to-back shows by the likes of Lindstrøm, Annie, WhoMadeWho, and Whitest Boy Alive. We enjoyed some raging metal bands and great late-night skwee and disco parties (Go, Todd Terje!), and also ran through the snow to catch some of the region's best up-and-coming acts. In between fish soup and Ringness beer, here's what we heard.

bylarm.no

1. LAMA

The new project from Jaga Jazzist's Nils Martin Larsen counts a clarinet and a glockenspiel among its arsenal but the weird instruments don't mar the overall effect of this post-rock stew. The music is really best experienced via their intense live show, a soaring six-man jam session backed by an incredible light-and-video show put together by Larsen's brother.

myspace.com/lamamusic



For more photos from By:Larm, visit XLR8R.com/126extras.

Words Vivian Host Photos Anne V. Erichse, Morgan Flament, Vivian Host, Kid Hops, Hilde Mesics Kleven



2. K-X-P

This is where you wish Perry Farrell had gone when he got into electronic music: moody Krautrock-y jams that slowly become a thumping dance frenzy. Timo Kaukolampi of electro outfit Op:L Bastards steers the ship with his Stylophone and arsenal of pedals, while Tom Leppänen (from psych-metal outfit Circle) whips the whole thing into shape with on-point drumming. A full-length is expected soon on Smalltown Supersound.

smalltownsupersound.com

3. JUVELEN

Glimmering, tightly put-together pop that exploits "one-man boy band" Jonas Pettersson's good looks and put-on dance moves. Produced by the man behind Robyn, JuveLEN ("The Jewel") is notable for its incredibly catchy, '80s-style jams and Pettersson's Prince-inspired falsetto. The Swedish know how to do pop, and this is one guilty pleasure that makes the girls go crazy and the straight boys very uncomfortable.

juvelenjuvelen.com

4. ÓLAFUR ARNALDS

"This song is called 'Himininn er ad Hrynja,'" mumbled Ólafur Arnalds from behind a grand piano and MacBook Pro shrouded in fog. "It means something like 'The sky is falling but the stars look good with your dress.'" Countrymen Sigur Rós and Múm paved the way for Arnalds, who delves deeper into the neo-classical electronic soundscapes that are a hallmark of modern Icelandic music. Lots of emotional strings and sad melodies for morning tea breaks.

myspace.com/olafurarnalds

5. SYNTAX TERRORKESTER

Like Lama, the TerrOrkester is a six-piece post-rock outfit, but they've got a dirtier, rockier feel and a stronger free-jazz bent. Lots of dynamics, and definitely Tortoise- and Explosions in the Sky-type vibes, but then they add in painted faces and kooky singing in Norwegian and suddenly you're watching a whole other animal.

myspace.com/syntaxterrorkester

6. KARIN PARK

Live, Norwegian electro-pop singer Karin Park sounds a bit like a tropical version of The Knife, especially on the punky "Babylon," which has a nice Buraka Som Sistema flex to it. She records for YAP (Young Aspiring Professionals), the label operated by Bergen dance punks Datarock.

myspace.com/karinpark

Words Michael Byrne
Photo Paul O'Valle

Rye Rye

M.I.A.'s protégé won't let high school get in the way of taking the club world by storm.



The skyrocketing career of the tiny rapper dubbed Rye Rye started with a phone message. It was 2006, and Ryeisha Berrain was 16 years old. Understand, being an urban teenager in Baltimore means going to clubs as early as you can get a fake ID—places like the labyrinthine Club Choices that stay open all night thumping to Baltimore club and hip-hop mixes from local names like DJ Big L or the late DJ K-Swift.

Baltimore's a small city, and it becomes a tight community. You see it on the dancefloors, the hierarchies, the associations—it becomes a web. So it's no surprise that Rye Rye, then just another girl at the club (albeit the sort of vivacious dancer that kinda makes you feel like a klutz just being in the same city with her) was two degrees of separation from club producer Blaqstarr. "My sister knew him," she says by phone from her Baltimore home. "One day I was writing a song just for fun, and she was

on the phone with him and he asked if [I] was around. I dunno, I guess because of the sound of my voice. So, I left a song on his answering machine."

The song was the second verse of the infectious party track "Shake It to the Ground," what's become one of the most exported—and remixed—Baltimore club tracks since the genre kicked off as a bastard child of Chicago house and East Coast rap in the late '80s. From hipster DJ crates in Oregon to Berlin dance clubs to Baltimore warehouses, "Shake It to the Ground" became an introduction to Baltimore club for a whole mess of people.

Within a year, Blaqstarr had gone on to produce tracks on M.I.A.'s star-making *Kala* and Rye Rye was asked to tour with the Sri Lankan firebrand. Rye Rye was still 17, touring overseas for months at a time and returning home to Baltimore to continue school and life as a teenager. "It's weird," she says, "especially

when I was in school. I would be gone for, like, months at a time and be back again startin' school. When I got back, everybody was, like, singing my songs, tryin' to imitate my voice. My voice is so different, so it ain't right."

This spring, Rye Rye became one of very few Baltimore rappers to release a major-label album, via a licensing deal between Universal and M.I.A.'s NEET label. Rappers in the city get signed all the time, but rarely does anything come of it—rappers that have fought through the ranks for decades haven't made it this far. But, boosted by producers like Blaqstarr, Sinden, and Diplo, both Baltimore and its club music are even more *en vogue* in 2009. And Rye Rye has the unique ability to keep up a flow to match the style's amphetamine breakbeats. "When I was eight years old, [Baltimore club is] what we used to dance [to]," she says. "And from then on like it was always [my] kind of music."

Rye Rye's *Go Pop Bang* is out now on NEET/Universal. myspace.com/therealyerrie

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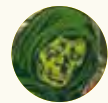
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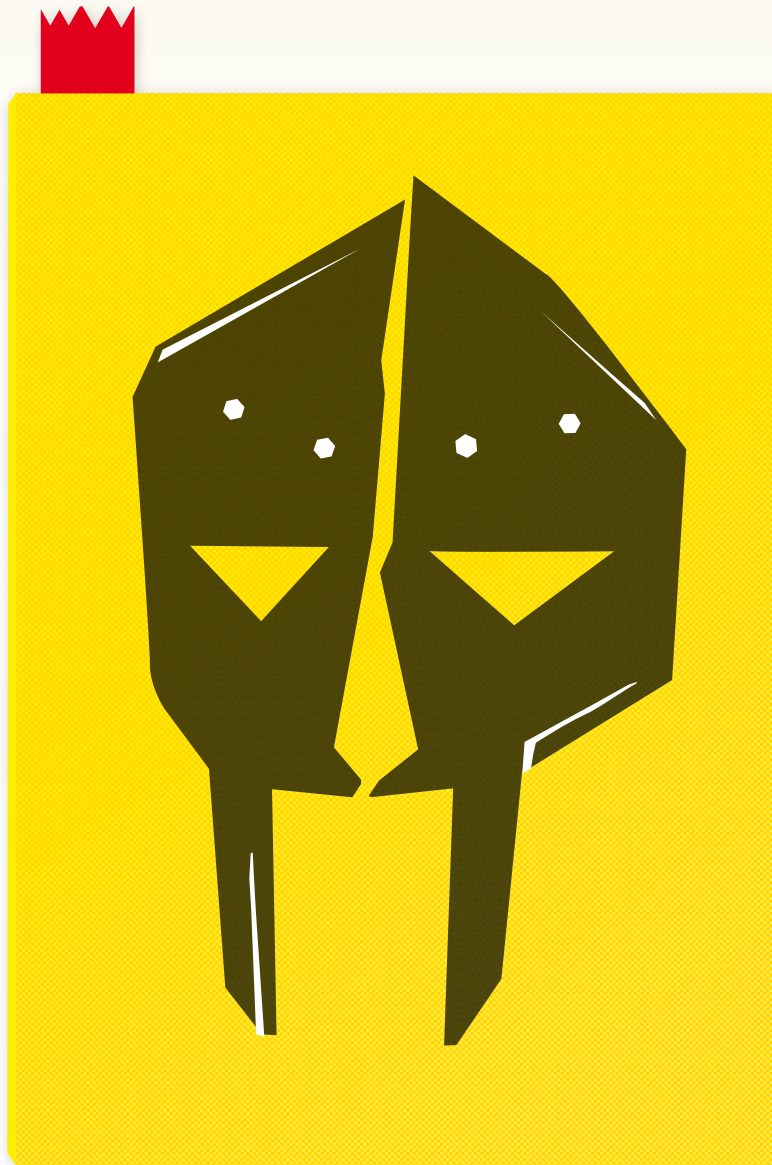
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Books of DOOM



Rapper **DOOM** tells us about a few of his favorite brain-melting serials.



Atlanta-based underground rap icon **DOOM** first emerged in 1997 as the mysterious metal-faced super-villain MF DOOM after the death of his brother forced the dissolution of their hip-hop duo KMD. Taking his name and look from Marvel Comics arch villain Doctor Doom (featured in *The Fantastic Four*), the now-40-something Daniel Dumile has released a dozen indispensable albums (including collabs with everyone from Danger Mouse on *DangerDoom*, and folks like Ghostface Killah, Raekwon, and Jake One (on March's *Born Like This*). Here, he takes a time machine back to his childhood to talk about the comics that made him the cartoon hip-hop king he is today.

DOOM's *Born Like This* is out now on Lex. myspace.com/mfdoom



Alpha Flight #1

Marvel (1983)

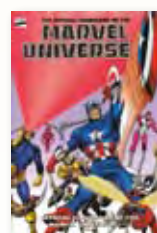
"The [comics] that I know are the old classic ones. The artwork had that style to it. The graphic novels now have ill pages, but it's just a different texture. My mind was more like a sponge then—I had less stuff to do and less to do with it. Reading that kind of stuff marked that time, so when I go back to my childhood days—not to say that these days are any worse or nothin'—I can really get into it."



Spiderman

Marvel (1962-present)

"Spiderman feels like Manhattan, and I know Manhattan, so anytime I'm reading about Spiderman and he's swinging north on 2nd, I can really visualize it. It's real descriptive of the area—even though they're near the Hudson River and they're throwing cars around and stuff like that, it's all [drawn] so you can feel it."



Official Handbook of the Marvel Universe (#1-15)

Marvel (1982-1984)

"There's a description of each character and where he came from, like a bio book of all the characters, whether they're inactive or active. I think that whole series brought a realism to [comic-book characters], too—their individual status and their real names and when they were born... the whole story."



Marvel Super Heroes Secret Wars (#1-12)

Marvel (1984-1985)

"This is when everybody had to get together. All the good guys and the bad guys had to fight the Beyonder. They were going through all kinds of time warps and had multiple universes going on, so they were headed to the future and then they'd come back and it'd be before things had happened. There was future, there was past, it was hot—good reading at that age."



The Fantastic Four

Marvel (1961-present)

"Dr. Doom's fatal flaw was his pride and perfectionism, and as a character, Doom the MC might have a similar fatal flaw: really striving for perfection. That's going to be from cradle to the grave. If you had to say a flaw, that's one of them, but my personal weak spot is children. They're so innocent that, you know, all my guard is down when it comes to children."

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Words Vivian Host
Photo Zulma Gonzales

A gothic electro trio creates the soundtrack for America's most strung-out

Salem



From left: John Holland, Jack Donoghue, and Heather Marlatt

It would be easy to dismiss Salem as disaffected youth, but the fact is they're profoundly affected... by drugs. "There is this song called 'Haffa' that I made when I was really, really high on OxyContin," says 20-year-old Jack Donoghue, the main beat-maker of the triad. "I don't think I would have been able to make it sound like that if I wasn't."

By naming their first EP *Yes, I Smoke Crack*, Salem knows they've tempted journalists seeking a quick fix, but they're happy to stand by Pandora's box as the demons pour out. Donoghue tells me straight-up that the last band fight was about member John Holland smoking crack in the bedroom (he's supposed to hit the pipe and blow out the bathroom window), and all agree that the only drug they don't really like is weed.

This would seem profoundly overblown, even boring, if Salem's music didn't sound so spun-out, so resolutely creepy, so much like the party after it's dragged on way too far into the daylight of the next day. "Tent" is a sizzurp-blurred chopped 'n' screwed synth track driven by slurred sex lyrics from a thug on the down low.

The off-kilter drum machines of "Brustreet" and "Whenusleep" are made even more haunting by Heather Marlatt's sweet and sleepy-eyed vocals; their sad chords, mostly unintelligible vocals, and space effects (echo, flange, delay) have sent fans reaching towards Cocteau Twins and My Bloody Valentine references, though these are mere road signs along this quick, distorted trip to the hinterlands of the mind.

Salem is young (average age: 22.666) and their songs are short (average length: three minutes), so to talk about them in the language of bands they didn't even grow up with seems ridiculous. What they did grow up with is more interesting anyway. John and Heather were raised in the woods and met at Michigan's Interlochen Center for the Arts, an exclusive fine arts high school located on ancient Indian lands and "right next to this trailer park that's basically one big meth lab," according to Heather. Later, Jack met John on the streets of Chicago and all three decided to make music as Salem. Their shared aesthetic is thus a summation of bizarre influences from the backwoods and the city: the forest, night, and horses; Southern rap, street drugs, and arson.

Many call Salem elusive, but a quick roll around the internet reveals the band's interest in witchcraft, skinheads, blurry video stills, gay sex, and mostly everything else your mother warned you against, except pets (Jack's got a snake, Sasha, and John has a rabbit named Joanie). Some of these interests get wrapped up into a very disturbing video Jack directed for "Dirt," starring an aspiring actress and a naked, gyrating call girl he found on Craigslist.

So far, the band only has two EPs out—the aforementioned *Crack* (Acephale) and the *Water* EP (for British tastemakers Merok)—but a glut of newer MP3s (under various aliases) litter the internet. "We're working on music always," says Donoghue. "We have so many songs that no one will probably ever hear. None of us has jobs so it's not really hard to fit in time to make music." The three are vague about a full-length, perhaps because they haven't yet figured out how to play live, or if they even want to. "We're still negotiatin'," says Donoghue, in the ghetto drawl he breaks into sometimes. "Our people are talkin' to their people."



For more excerpts from our Salem interview, visit XLR8R.com/126extras.

• s4lem.com, myspace.com/fjhhmm

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Compiled by Liz Baca

Tigers, leopards, and crocs, oh my! Spring's wardrobe takes cues from the jungle book.



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FACTOZOID!!

Chelonis R. Jones!

The Berlin-by-way-of-New York electro-house vocalist talks turtles and truths!

CHELONIS R. JONES IS AN UNPUBLISHED NOVELIST!

"I have boxes and boxes [of writings] (5000 to 6000 pages, from age eight to the present), but I am terrified to release them. I've witnessed what they've done (or didn't do) to my music!"

CHELONIS R. JONES WRITES SONGS ABOUT PLANE CRASHES!

"'The cockpit' [from *Chatterton*] is about the sole survivor of a plane crash, who simply has second thoughts about being rescued! [Songs like this are] always like, 'Someone rescue me/We need a hero/We all are one/Come together/Send me an angel'—I wanted to get away from those lyrical clichés. What if someone found peace by being confronted with their final moment?! Electronic music never dealt with such a lyrical angle before... until now."

CHELONIS R. JONES IS PART TURTLE!

"The R in my name is an homage to my stepfather. The Jones is attributed to my effaced/erased bio-father. Chelonis is taken in part from the Latin word for a turtle and its shell. Need I say more?"

THE PLACE BELONGS TO CHELONIS R. JONES!

"I once stopped my show in the middle of the set to offer an annoying audience member 10 Euro to get out of my face, leave the venue, and purchase a Happy Meal! He was lucky not to get his ass kicked in front of 700 fans. For one hour to 90 minutes the place belongs to Chelonis R. Jones. I don't share my stage with attention-grabbing, talentless donkeys desperately seeking the attention of their mock-lesbian exes because they possibly have a penis complex! *Get tha fuck outta here!* I simply attract vaudeville!"

CHELONIS R. JONES OWNS THE SPIRIT OF BASQUIAT!

"I just woke up one morning wanting to paint. I was utterly shocked at the things which came out! It's like inspecting one's toilet bowl... but more vivid, less putrid! I do everything backwards in my life—I did 350 paintings, then went to join up for classes. They looked at my portfolio and assumed I recently escaped the nearest asylum! One nice elderly German man then whispered in my ear, 'Forget it! Classrooms are for those in need of a compass. You've strangely invented your point B. You own the spirit of Basquiat!' At that time, I had never heard of that name. He was stunned. He then decided to teach me about my tools instead!"

Chelonis R. Jones' *Chatterton* is out now on Systematic Recordings. chelonis.com

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Pink Mountaintops

Running up that hill with Vancouver's love-song mountain man.



On a smoke break outside his East Vancouver practice space, Stephen McBean is waxing poetic about his latest Pink Mountaintops album, *Outside Love*. The album, a collection of tobacco-stained psych pop, blends the ambience of Spacemen 3 with Lou Reed-style songwriting and hints of timeless country. Its influences are more conceptual, owing a debt to Norwegian black metal forefathers Darkthrone. "When you listen to [Darkthrone]," he says, "it really engulfs your spirit and takes you to a different world."

Outside Love's vintage production makes for a fitting entry into McBean's growing oeuvre, which also includes the thunderous neoclassic rock of Black Mountain. "Both bands are becoming further and further apart in their intent and direction," McBean explains between puffs. "Still, certain things that are intended for one end up being with the other. They cheat on each other every once in a while."

The fact that McBean uses the language of relationships is no coincidence, as his work

as Pink Mountaintops focuses on broken love. The first self-titled record from the project was highly sexual (where songs like "I (Fuck) Mountains" took a slow-groove approach and "Sweet '69" dripped with garage-rock sweat), while 2006's freedom-obsessed *Axis of Evol* played with metaphors of love and war. *Outside Love* takes a simpler route: straight-up love songs. "It's a bit more of a romance-novel vibe," McBean says. "There are some love songs, some break-up songs, and some celebrations of friends." Hazy, two-chord drone anthems like "Axis: Thrones of Love" and the vaguely digital pre-punk of "The Gayest of Sunbeams" find McBean achieving new levels of sonic diversity while he wrestles with similar themes.

Perhaps this album's romantic tone owes something to how it was conceived. McBean was the best man at a friend's wedding in Montreal when he met A Silver Mt. Zion violinist Sophie Trudeau, who played on the majority of the album. "We didn't even know each other at the time, but they made us play a song at the

wedding," he recalls. "They did their vows, and then we played 'Closer to Heaven,' the last song on the record. We played around in Sophie's kitchen [afterward], and we were like, 'We should make a record together—this is fun!'"

Besides love, McBean is also fixated on nurturing the perfectly scorched textures that are born during the recording process. "I obsess forever over reverbs, or finding the right fuzz pedal to make sure the space echoes perfectly," he says of his recording hang-ups. "I probably could have spent another year trying to mix things until it was right in my head, but you have to let go at a certain point."

Letting go is a key step—McBean doesn't want to lose the special essence of Pink Mountaintops in the technical hustle 'n' bustle. "There's the threat of becoming jaded by music and not being able to enjoy just listening to it," he admits. "It's that balance of trying to stay sane and staying true to your heart."

• *Outside Love* is out now on Jagjaguwar. myspace.com/pinkmountaintops



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GOOD STUFF

D-Structure

A San Francisco store and clothing label keeps it all local, all the time.

Never mind a child—it takes a village to raise a store. At least, that's true of San Francisco's D-Structure. The shop is a testament to the Bay Area's streetwear scene, repping local lines Exact-Science, Free Gold Watch, Gold Coin, and Rebel 8, alongside their in-house labels D-Structure and Dirty Six. Located at the historic corner of Haight and Fillmore—where upscale salons and stores meet gunshots and medical marijuana clinics—D-Structure is a prime hangout spot for local skaters, sneaker fiends, and fly ladies, whose familiar faces can be seen modeling clothes for the company's online shop.

D-Structure supports the local art and graffiti scenes, holding monthly gallery shows and channeling S.F.'s chilled-out street styles into its casual pieces. "Our art-driven apparel is really our bread and butter, and we wouldn't have it any other way," says owner Azikiwe Anderson. With exotic herbs wafting in the breeze, iced coffee in hand, and the new Hieroglyphics record bumping on the stereo, Anderson tells us a bit more about D-Structure's favorite in-store items. *Tyra Bangs*

d-structuresf.com



1. GOLD COIN 1 UP RUGBY SHIRT (\$70)

"With only 300 pieces made, Gold Coin keeps your steeze exclusive. Check out followthecoins.com."

2. D-STRUCTURE SMOKING HANDS T-SHIRT (\$30)

"Josh Lawyer strikes again with an abstract and inquisitive piece exclusively for us."

3. IRON FIST DIRTY HARRY WOMEN'S HOODIE (\$60)

"A reversible hoodie with a Debbie Harry tribute on front and leopard all-over print inside."

4. D-STRUCTURE | DSSSF T-SHIRT (\$32)

"Our logo is the lightning bolt. It can mean something different to everyone but it's still a sign of power, strength and the idea of size and scale."

5. NEW LEAF DEEP BREATH T-SHIRT (\$32)

"Inspired by life, New Leaf clothing blends organic, handmade works of art with modern design aesthetics by artists Erik Otto and Deny Khoung."



CRYPTACIZE



MYTHOMANIA



Spin Cycle



Great Dane **Anders Trentemøller** releases his first mix CD this May. *Harbour Boat Trips: Copenhagen* (HFN) is a shoegazing mix featuring tracks from **Suicide**, **The Raveonettes**, and **Emiliana Torrini**.

Rapper **Mike Jones** told iHiphop.com he lost 100 pounds on the Subway sandwich diet.

NYC 8-bit punks **Anamanaguchi** commissioned seven rad pixel art videos to accompany the tracks on their new album, *Dawn Metropolis*. Burn your retinas at dawnmetropolis.com.

Producer **Dre Skull** recently launched his new label, **Mixpak**, with "Gone Too Far," featuring vocals from dancehall superstar

Sizzla. Watch for exclusive VIP versions from **Vybz Kartel** and **77 Klash**.

Also on the new vinyl frontier, **Jacques Renault** and **Marcos Cabral** of **Runaway** are starting a fledgling disco-techno label called On the Prowl.

Dubstep producer (and Hyperdub label don) **Kode 9** is working on a book about the use of sound as a weapon, inspired by the work of French philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari.

Rapper **Thirstin Howl III** has a new TV show called *Jail Recipes*, inspired by easy-to-cook dishes favored by inmates. Check YouTube for the trailer.

Celebrating 10 years is America's longest-running drum & bass weekly, *Respect*. The Thursday night party, run by **DJ Machete** and his cohorts in the **Junglist Platoon** crew, marked the occasion with a March party featuring **RAW**, **Shortee**, **CRS7**, and **Reid Speed**.

Wolfgang Voigt debuts his legendary GAS ambient project in the U.S. (alongside video artist **Petra Hollenbach**) on May 29 as part of NYC's Wordless Music Series (he will also perform at Montreal's MUTEK festival). Also performing are **Mono**, **Mice Parade**, and **Jóhann Jóhannsson**. Visit wordlessmusic.org for more info.

The Pixies' **Joey Santiago**, **Devo's Jerry Casale**, and **Tommy Lee** all appear on the forthcoming album from breakbeat don **Adam Freeland's** band, **Cope**, out in June.

Gig Posters Volume 1: Rock Show Art of the 21st Century (Quirk) features over 700 examples of the best rock art, including 101 tear-out 11x14 posters ready for your wall. Check irreference.com for more.

The second annual ATP New York festival, co-curated by **Flaming Lips**, happens September 11-13 at Kutshers Country Club in Monticello; acts include **Anti-Pop Consortium**, **Panda Bear**, **Atlas Sound**, and **The Melvins**.

Mo' Money, Mo' Problems

NORSE LABEL RUNE GRAMMOFON CELEBRATES 10 YEARS WITH AN ECLECTIC ART BOOK.

"It's hard work to sell rune CD outside of small group of freaks." That's the name of just one of the graphical works that you'll find inside a new book-and-CD package from Norwegian label **Rune Grammofon**. That statement—derived from an email the label received from a distributor—is not only the title of a ragtag artwork, but functions as a mantra of sorts for Grammofon as they wage an uphill battle to bring granular techno and experimental electronic music to the masses. Now, Rune Grammofon's 10-year history is gorgeously detailed in *Money Will Ruin Everything: The Second Edition*. The book contains 152 hardbound pages of designer Kim Hiorthøy's visual treats (album covers, flyers, photographs) and his interviews with label head Rune Kristoffersen. And if the intense graphic designs don't automatically put you in that selective "freaks" category, surely the accompanying 25 tracks (over two CDs)—by the likes of Alog, Maja Ratke, and Box—will.

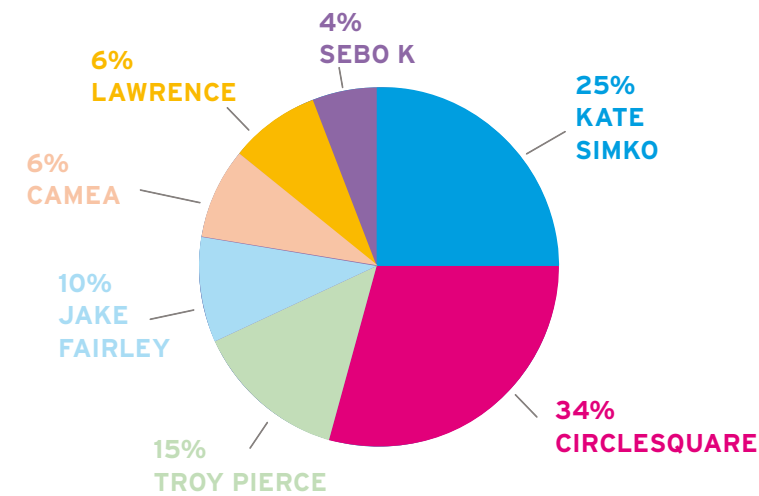


;D Phone Pix!
From Mr. Lif

"My outdoor think tank (a.k.a. the rooftops of Philadelphia)."

MR. LIF'S *I HEARD IT TODAY* IS OUT APRIL 21 ON BLOODBOT TACTICAL ENTERPRISES. MYSPACE.COM/MRLIF

XLR8R'S TECHNO CRUSHES



Gumby goes New Age (or is that New Rave)? "N.D.A. Video 1" from *The New Dark Age*, an art show from ex-Paper Radder Ben Jones, at NYC's Deitch Projects.



WHAT'S GOOD...

Expect new records in the coming months from **Amanda Blank** (Downtown), **Nathan Fake** (Border Community), **MF Doom** (Stones Throw), **All Leather** (Dim Mak), **Dirty Projectors** (Domino), **Datarock** (Nettwerk), and **Cage**, whose *Depart From Me* LP (set for release on Def Jux on June 30) will be prefaced by an EP for Adult Swim.



Just Another Day
At the Mall

Mixtape by The Pains of Being Pure At Heart

1. Girls "Lust for Life"

It's a great pop song, every bit its namesake's equal. At one point, the singer sings, "I wish I had a pizza and a bottle of wine," and I totally wish I had that; too. It speaks to me.

2. The Manhattan Love Suicides "Veronica"

A blast of fuzz-pop wonder. This one reminds us of Winona Ryder's character of the same name in *Heathers*, where she's a genius but still trying to be popular. But then she kills the popular kids, and realizes that isn't all that cool either.

3. Hotstylz "Lookin' Boy"

The best goofy snap-diss track that no one cared about.

4. Atlas Sound "Activation"

One of the million tracks Bradford Cox gave away free on his blog. Simple, arresting, and basically perfect.

5. Crystal Stilts "Prismatic Room"

If you walked into the coolest party ever and there was a band playing, it would be Crystal Stilts. We hear a lot of Dylan in this song, without the vocals sounding anything like Dylan. That = awesome.

6. Knight School "You are the Key"

It brings to mind The Vaselines covering GBV. Like, instantly catchy and awesome, without all the arena-rock gestures.

7. Zaza "Arm's Length"

It takes about 2:45 to realize just how good this song is, and then you realize the whole thing has been awesome and you want to listen to it again. It's like *The Usual Suspects* in that regard, but sounds far more unusual.

8. The Primitives "Lazy"

It's one of those rare instances where the verse is actually better than the chorus.

9. Shrag "Hopelessly Wasted"

We always fall for the ballad on any album, but the whole thing is pretty epic, intense, and righteous.

10. Wake the President "Miss Tierney"

This is about the singer's girlfriend, who is really cool and stuff—that's why the song is equally cool (and stuff).

The Pains of Being Pure at Heart's self-titled debut is out now on Slumberland. thepainsofbeingpureatheart.com

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INDIVIDUALITY



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what moves you

THE WORLD'S MOST NOTORIOUS BREAKBEAT TRIO, THE PRODIGY, ON STADIUM-FILLING,
STEALING, AND THEIR STRUGGLE TO KEEP IT TOGETHER.

THE

WARRIORS

WORDS [VIVIAN HOST](#) PHOTOS [PAUL DUGDALE](#)

The Prodigy made their new album, *Invaders Must Die*, in a tiny studio that looks like a teenager's bedroom. It's a dark nook stuffed with a computer, some monitors, and a maroon couch. A horror movie poster hangs on one wall, and every available surface is strewn with synths—including the Moog Prodigy, for which the outfit is named.

There's some half-empty water bottles here, a stick of deodorant there, two turntables with XL Records slipmats, and stacks of old acid house and hardcore records—like Bug Kann and The Plastic Jam's "Made in Two Minutes" and Kariya's "Baby Let Me Love You"—on the floor.

They didn't plan it this way. The three originally tried to make the album in grandiose rock 'n' roll tradition, blowing loads of studio time and money on wild ideas and all-night parties. "It was pretty vibing in studio originally," laughs MC Maxim Reality. "I was debating with myself all the time where I should park my car so I could go have a drink."

"We came at it from every angle," says fellow MC/maniac/firestarter Keith Flint. "We left nothing unturned. [It wasn't] about walking into a studio, and the door shutting, and [makes a sucking air noise] silence, like, 'You have to write music now.' That's horrible. That's like walking into a room and someone saying, 'Have an idea,' and you saying, 'What idea?' And someone saying, 'Any fucking idea!'"

"I think I said that a few times!" says Liam Howlett, the "mad controller" of the group, with a sly grin that suggests he was frustrated more than once during the making of this album.

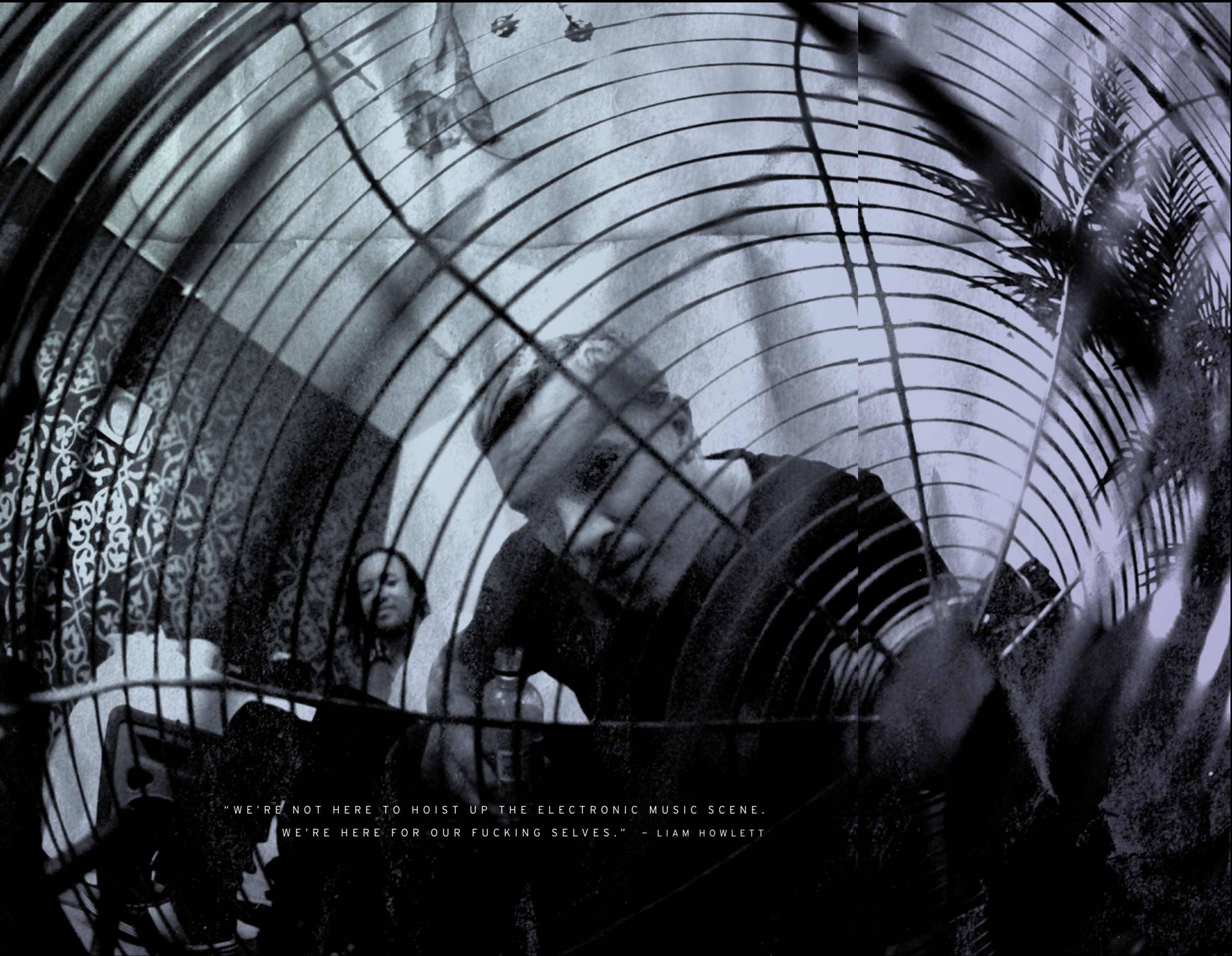
Yet after six months of renting a large room at London's Sarm Studios, having loads of friends come down and jam, and downing liter after liter of alcohol, The Prodigy found themselves with only a few mediocre (by their own admission) demos. "None of it worked. Not a single fucking thing," says Liam Howlett, the band's real production prodigy. "Eight months later I reverted back to doing it myself and I think that's when it started to happen again. It was a learning process more than anything else."

BREAKING AND ENTERING

Invaders Must Die is 40 minutes of breakbeat punk, the style that The Prodigy has defined since the start. There's some thrillers on here: "Omen" is the best track that drum & bass stadium-fillers Pendulum never made, all distorted bass and screeching synth pads topped by Keith's signature sneer; "Take Me to the Hospital" pulls out every gloriously catchy rave trick (sped-up vocals, tweaky synth stabs) over a kick-your-head-in break. Not every track is a keeper—the title track is a bit play-by-the-numbers electronica and the synthetic-sounding guitars and fight-club vocals of "Colours" feel dated. Still, nearly 20 years after their first record, The Prodigy's beats are as hard-hitting as ever, and there's no contesting their talent at bringing electronic, hip-hop, and rock together in the right way.



KEITH FLINT (RIGHT) STRIKES A POSE.



"WE'RE NOT HERE TO HOIST UP THE ELECTRONIC MUSIC SCENE.
WE'RE HERE FOR OUR FUCKING SELVES." - LIAM HOWLETT

And if their aesthetic is a bit stuck in the '90s, well, at least they own it. "Even though people have said we reinvented ourselves, I don't believe we have," explains Howlett. "We've always done the same thing. The foundation is the drums and the bass and the energy behind the music. It's really important for us to remain focused and keep that strong instead of doing a weak version of something else."

That said, *Invaders Must Die*'s best moments are its oldest-sounding, from the hands-in-the-sky piano breakdown that bisects the grinding, apocalyptic drums of "World's on Fire" to "Warriors Dance," which revolves around a sample from Final Cut and True Faith's 1991 rave hit "Take Me Away." It's the latter track that served as the lynchpin for the album; the rallying cry that found the three reclaiming the old-school flag (and their friendship) at the same time.

"The shape of the album didn't come in until we had this gig coming up last May, a Gatecrasher party in England," explains Howlett from a sunny living room at Sarm. "Keith or Maxim was like, 'Let's just forget about the album for a minute. Let's write a track to play live.' That became 'Warriors Dance.' It helped me. It was almost like doing a remix for someone else. It took a week to write, and the energy [for the rest of the album] came off the back of that. Having the freedom and headspace, I was able to move on to a different track. I was out of the doom and gloom at that point."

"That freedom was important," Flint says to Howlett, nodding supportively. "It seemed like you kind of went back the old-school way of writing [with 'Warriors Dance']. The way you used the samples and did the soundscape up seemed a lot different to me. It seemed like going back to the beginning."

"'Warriors Dance' is like us doing 'Smack My Bitch Up,'" Howlett concurs. "It's a banger. I think it's a big statement as well. The way pirates do, we fucking steal. We steal from other people's music still. It's part of going back to the old-school way of thinking. Sampling is still really important to this band, and it can't lose that."

A PIRATES' LIFE

Not only are The Prodigy musical pirates, they actually look like pirates. They're covered in tattoos, and wear chunky silver rings on every finger—a warning, perhaps, that you do not want one of them to punch you. With his massive '70s-style fur-collared coat and dreadlocks, MC Maxim Reality could be a space pimp from *The Matrix*; during the entire interview, he never takes off his wrap-around sunglasses. Flint (sometimes lovingly called Flinty) busts in late, a sinewy mass of kinetic energy in a candy-striped dress shirt and blazer, his preppy affectation offset by a large ball piercing that hangs out of his nose like a metal booger.

All three are forthcoming and genuine, but the two MCs are much more chill than one would expect, given their maniacal onstage personas. Actually, it's Liam who talks the most, Liam who looks like he's seen the backside of the most haunted nights, and Liam who is the quickest to jump to the band's defense. He sits right next to me, but conducts nearly the entire interview looking out the window over the London rooftops, giving me a prominent view of a tattoo on his neck: a crown emblazoned with the words "I Have Arrived." It seems funny. I mean, like he needs proof?

But maybe he does. Though The Prodigy seems rock solid now, sitting here reminiscing as old friends, there have been a few times when their future was uncertain. After their first gig in 1990, at Dalston's rough cave The Labyrinth, the crew quickly ascended to underground fame, playing back-to-back weekends for a few years. Rammed full of hits like "Out of Space" and "Your Love," their 1992 debut, *The Prodigy Experience*, defined XL Recordings' early years with high-speed, hands-in-the-air hardcore anthems that continue to be revived and reworked by

"WE'RE GOING TO BE US AGAINST THE WORLD AND THAT'S IT."

- KEITH FLINT





A LAIDBACK MAXIM REALITY

other bands.

After that, you can derive a lot of meaning from their album titles. The band ollied off dance culture's demise with 1994's *Music for the Jilted Generation*, its dystopian dark breakbeats neatly referencing the death of rave while showing The Prodigy could be successful independent of the ups and downs of dance music. Having achieved rock-star status, the crew got large on 1997's aptly named *The Fat of the Land*, delivering some of their biggest hits with the incendiary "Firestarter" and "Smack My Bitch Up."

FIGHT CLUB

And then, things started to go wrong. "After you've had a big record, it's very difficult to drum up the hunger," offers Howlett. "After *Fat of the Land* I didn't want to be lazy, but I was fucking content. I wasn't pissed off about anything. I was like, 'Heyyyy, everything's beautiful.' Perhaps perceiving they didn't need each other, the band started to splinter. "2002 and 2003 was quite a down time for the band," recalls Howlett, starting to explain the "invaders" of the album's title. "Me and Keith weren't speaking for about a year or so and the band had started to pull apart. And people over here did nothing to help us put it back together. I'm not talking about journalists and stuff—I'm talking about people close to us, some of our friends. People would be like, 'Oh, Keith's working with them. What do you reckon to that? Check him out. What the fuck's he doing?' Like a total wind-up. Paranoia. The invaders could [refer to] them... but it's more than that. It's like... all these horrible thoughts that get into your head."

Right around this time, Howlett announced to the band that he was making the next Prodigy record... by himself. He bought a large house in Essex, installed a home studio, and isolated himself with producer Neil McLellan. Days were spent exploring fruitless ideas, but as soon as Howlett tried to go to sleep inspiration would strike—he'd end up spending all night in the studio, drunk-dancing to his new loops.

2004's *Always Outnumbered, Never Outgunned* found Liam alone on the range, but using Prodigy's status to call in vocal contributions from such unlikely suspects as goth icon Siouxsie Sioux and high-speed rapper Twista. The record, which came out at the end of electroclash's reign and just as the new wave of electro-rock artists (MSTRKRFT, Justice) were poised to reboot dance music, fell under the radar. Although it was received tepidly

by journalists and fans, songs like "Memphis Bells" and "Action Radar" stand up better after a few years than tracks they were originally overshadowed by.

At some point, *Always Outnumbered* had to be toured, forcing Keith and Maxim back into the studio to figure out how to rework songs other people had written, and forcing the trio to figure out how to get along again. This process took another few years, during which time someone said to the band "Invaders must die," and the phrase became the mantra of this record.

"We've come out of a bad time for the three of us," confesses Howlett. "It feels like we really fought to make this record the best record it could be. That struggle is the only way you can make a good record. We are quite abrasive people and I wouldn't have thought we would make an uplifting record on this one, but we did."

ALL FOR ONE

The band is totally comfortable discussing their dynamic, their struggle to stay together, their creative process. The only time they bristle is when I suggest that their live show has set the standard for electronic acts to live up to.

"I'm not into Kraftwerk, so when I think of electronic I'm thinking four geezers behind a fucking laptop. Boring," says Howlett. "If that's what electronic music was, we hated it. We wanted nothing to do with it. I was into the Beastie Boys. I was into chaos, I was into fucking noise, like Public Enemy. Public Enemy didn't come along and say, 'We have to have one DJ and two rappers and this is what it's got to be.' They had that, but they did something more with it. And their music turned the whole fucking thing upside down. That's punk rock. It wasn't like we wanted to be a band and we wanted to have a frontman. It's just our personalities. We're not here to hoist up the electronic music scene. We're here for our fucking selves and that's the end of it."

"We're going it alone," agrees Flint. "We don't want to go down with anyone else's mistakes or anyone's shit. We're going to be us against the world and that's it."

Invaders Must Die is out now on Take Me to the Hospital/Cooking Vinyl.
theprodigy.com



Visit XLR8R.com/126extras for more from our exclusive interview with The Prodigy.

VOODOO PEOPLE

A few more questions for The Prodigy.

What are your favorite tracks to do on stage?

Liam: "It's exciting to do the new stuff, like 'Take Me to the Hospital.'"

Maxim: "It varies from show to show. 'Voodoo People' came back over the last year. 'Smack My Bitch Up' is a constant tune. It's always there. It never drops. It never dips. Everything else just rises to that level."

Keith: "'Spitfire' was a great trigger, up until maybe the middle of this tour, but now I love doing 'World's on Fire.' It's got kind of a ride to it."

What is the first record you ever bought?

Liam: "We all bought a similar type of record..."

Keith: "Mine was The Specials' 'A Message

to You, Rudy,'" followed by Gary Numan 'Are 'Friends' Electric?' And then probably *All Mod Cons* by The Jam."
Maxim: "One of my favorite records was 'Ghost Town' by The Specials. I lent it to one of my friends, this rude girl, and she lost it. I was just so gutted. She was a hard one, a proper little rude girl with the monkey boots and the jeans and the crombie. The Specials records were everything to me. Lending your records out and someone losing them was like the end of the world."
Liam: "My first was the [ska compilation] *Dance Craze*. I used to have an alarm clock radio that you could set to a cassette. Every morning I used to wake up to Bad Manners' 'Lip Up Fatty.'"

What did you blow your first big paycheck on?

Maxim: "Mine was 50 quid and I went and bought a cashmere jumper. My mother had a go at me because I went and spent all my money."

Keith: "What, you mean, my first check from the band?"

Liam: "You never had any money before the band!"

What quality do you most like in people?

Maxim: "Ignorance."

Liam: "Dishonesty."

Keith: "Yeah, dishonesty."

After putting out an album, do you feel tapped out, inspiration-wise?

Liam: "Not at all. It's like a switch gets turned on and you don't know when it's going to get turned off. At the moment, we're on a good roll and you got to keep on that roll while it's there. That's what I've learned."

Maxim: "When you've got an album done and you're on the road and everything's in place that's when the inspirations and ideas are flowing better. That's when the ideas are at their peak."

A LOOK AT SOME OF THE DEFINING INFLUENCES OF DFA
 FUTURE-POP WHIZ **THE JUAN MACLEAN.**

PAST PERSPECT

Taking his stage name from Juan Atkins, one of the founding fathers of Detroit techno, Juan (a.k.a. John) MacLean has never been shy about revealing his musical tastes and influences. A record geek at heart, the dance punker-turned-future-house purveyor is known to draw liberally from music's past in the creation of his work as The Juan Maclean. And part of the appeal of his tracks—which, likely informed by his DJ sets, range from epic 12-minute dancefloor burners to shorter, pop-focused cuts—is their knowing admiration of dance music's canon. He can cop from historic acts like Kraftwerk (see the *Ralf und Florian*-like ambient synth hums of “In the Afternoon” or the automated Parliament-style funk of “Give

Me Every Little Thing” from 2005's *Less Than Human*) and make the results sound contemporary and reverential rather than derivative.

For his latest effort, *The Future Will Come*, MacLean—a former member of Sub Pop synth punks Six Finger Satellite—employed a fresh set of inspirations, and a new recording methodology. Encouraged by his time touring *Less Than Human* with a live band, he wanted an inclusive-sounding record with more live instrumentation, leading him to bring in musician pals such as Holy Ghost's Nick Milhiser and Alex Frankel and LCD Soundsystem vocalist Nancy Whang (with whom he does many back-and-forth duets). “I just always think that you make an infinitely better record when you have

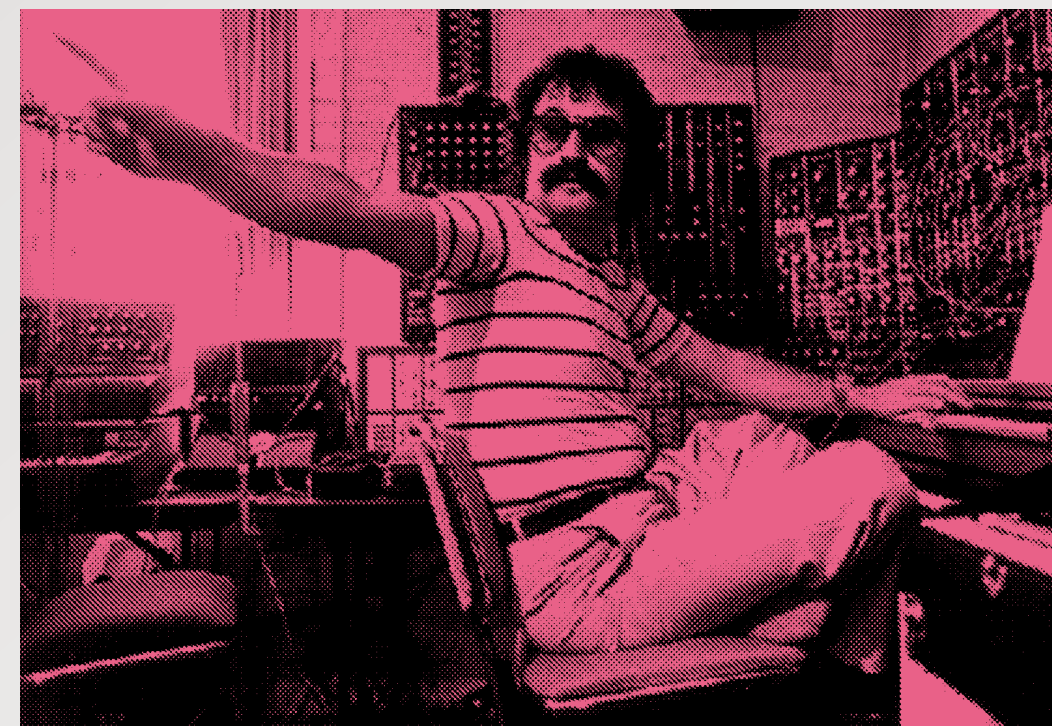
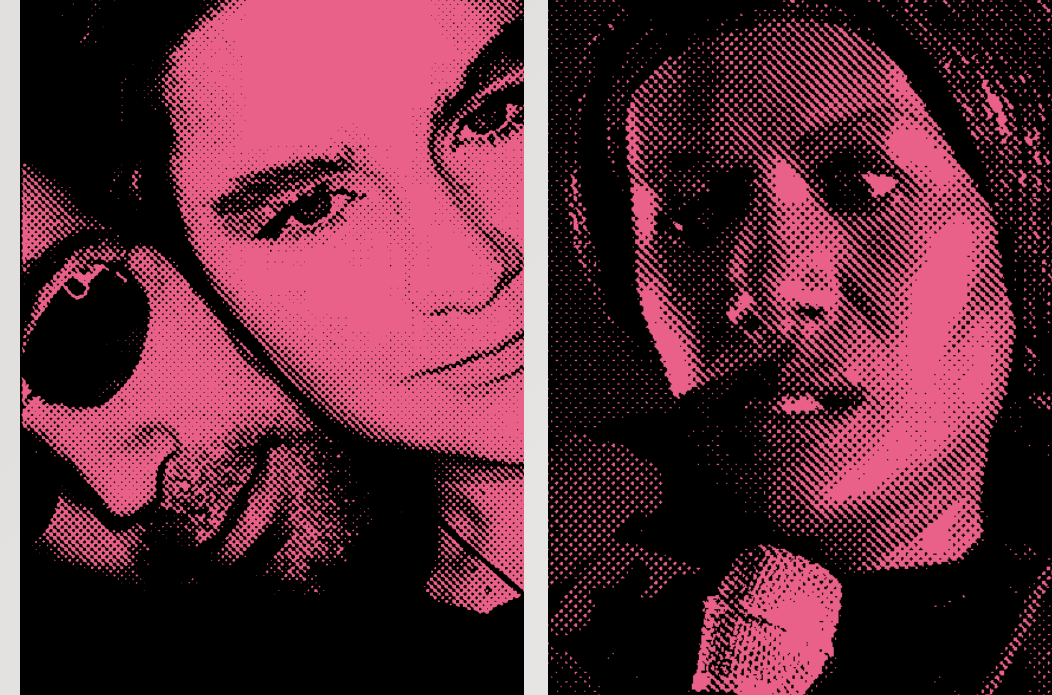
[other] people contributing,” he explains.

Aesthetically, the album draws heavily upon British synth pop of the late '70s and early '80s, an influence that MacLean will be the first to point out. “Nobody at DFA has cared about [revealing their influences] from the very beginning,” he says. “Which is surprising to people, because I think people perceive all of us as these elitist hipster douchebags. But we all just want to make songs that we secretly believe could be played on the radio. We want to make music that people like.”

We asked MacLean to take us through some of the core influences on *The Future Will Come* and break down the music that inspired some of its standout tracks.



Hear The Juan MacLean's exclusive XLR8R mix at XLR8R.com/podcast



Opposite: Juan MacLean at home. Above (clockwise from top left): Dubtribe Sound System, Grace Jones, Giorgio Moroder

THE HUMAN LEAGUE

“Early on in the making of this record I knew that I really wanted Nancy involved, and not just as a guest vocalist. And at that time I revisited The Human League. In our world, I feel like you’re supposed to say The Human League were great until a certain point, which was when the two girls came along. And in a kneejerk way I went by that. I always listened to the earliest Human League stuff, ‘Being Boiled’ and tracks like that, which are great and have always been

a big influence on me.

“But then, thinking about Nancy singing, I put on the Human League record *Dare* and was so blown away. I realized I hadn’t given it a chance at all; that the production values were really good and that there were still these really interesting sounds. And the hooks were amazing. I also realized for the first time that the girls couldn’t really sing very well, which I never thought of as a kid because I always thought of them as this very professional band. I didn’t realize that

they operated in this punk way, with Phil Oakey just finding these two girls in a club and saying, ‘Do you wanna be in my band?’ In that new context, I listened to that record again—even songs like ‘Don’t You Want Me,’ which I had always liked but sort of wrote off as being, like, kitschy, jokey ’80s music—and really fell in love with it all over again. It made a lot of sense to me instantly. I have to admit that I very much referenced it and used it as a template for the album in many ways.”

GIORGIO MORODER

“‘The Simple Life’ was sort of my attempt at ‘I Feel Love,’ the Donna Summer/Giorgio Moroder track, which I feel like is untouchable in many ways. But it was a huge influence on that track, mainly with the arpeggiated bass synth line and in the way it’s so stretched out. The idea of having these very melodic, poppy vocals buried in this really heavy dance track also comes from that.”

GRACE JONES

“I feel like there’s a big Grace Jones influence on ‘Accusations.’ She was another big influence on this album. That might not come through so overtly, but around the time we were recording I had been listening to a lot of Grace Jones—again—and in this track, musically, I feel like it came through. I guess it’s sort of the most disco and has a little bit of a funk element to it as well.”

ALTERNATIVE TV

“‘Human Disaster’ is a very odd song on the record, the ballad. It’s sort of an answer to Alternative TV’s ‘Facing Up to the Facts.’ That song is very empty and spare and just has those same piano strikes. And, oddly enough, the Swans record (the first one when Jarboe came along) that has lots of spare instrumentation and piano was also a big influence on this track.”

DUBTRIBE SOUND SYSTEM

“It’s no secret that I stole the piano part on ‘Happy House’ from Dubtribe Sound System’s ‘Do It Now’—because they stole it. Their song is a combination of three samples, and they had taken it from something else. And those chords are just clichéd house things; they could be a million house tracks. People, for a little while, really liked to send me links to blogs where guys—it’s always dudes—were

arguing about it. You know, ‘This song isn’t as good as everyone thinks it is because he stole this from a Dubtribe Sound System song!’ Interestingly, Sunshine, who is one of the members of Dubtribe Sound System, got in touch with me and was so happy about it. We’re going to re-release ‘Happy House’ with some new remixes, and I think I’m going to have him do a remix of it. Kind of like as a ‘Fuck you’ to those people.”

The Future Will Come is out April 14 on DFA. thejuanmaclean.com

CHANNELING THE PAST, L.A.'S DAM-FUNK
BRINGS FUNK BACK TO THE FUTURE.

GALAXY

QUEST



“I definitely am a true believer that there are things we’re not privy to but are happening all around us,” Damon Riddick, the one-man-band and DJ better known as Dam-Funk (pronounced DAME-funk), tells me over the phone from L.A. “And sometimes you can just catch it in your peripheral vision.” In the context of our conversation, Dam is talking about a UFO sighting that inspired “Brookside Park,” a sprawling opus that’s central to his upcoming debut LP, *Toeachizown*.

But he could easily be referring to the way he’s pulled obscure aspects of the early 1980s—namely those fleeting, forgotten moments when funk and R&B were boldly reaching for the cosmos—into his orbit. “I’d compare it to old UHF TV, stuff like *Midnight Special* that you’d catch late at night when you weren’t supposed to be up,” Dam says of his aesthetic. “Or on Saturday morning before the cartoons would start, you might catch a local independent music show. That kinda vibe.”

If you’re old enough to remember seeking out music and culture in the pre-cable era, his comment needs no explanation. If not, *Toeachizown* tracks like “Brookside Park” are capable of transporting you there. With its vocoder-scrambled alien vocals and chugging analog synths, the track is the audio equivalent of a faint, eerie memory—be it of an inexplicably frightening low-budget video or an unexplainable childhood dream.

“I’m fortunate to be a California kid,” Dam explains. “I grew up riding around in the mountains, always looking up. That’s how I’d catch certain things that would happen out of the ordinary. Brookside is a park by where I grew up in Pasadena, where everything would go down on a Sunday. When I was a teenager, I saw something go across the sky—an orange type of orb. But it was quiet. Everybody there mentioned it but nobody really talked about it again. I just never forgot. [‘Brookside Park’] has the vibe of the music that was going on at the time. I wanted to make something where you could imagine being there.”

NIGHTS IN BLACK SATIN

Musically, Dam-Funk is often associated with so-called boogie—essentially mid-tempo, post-disco synth-funk best exemplified by early ’80s Prelude Records releases like D-Train’s “You’re the One For Me.” Thanks to Funkmosphere, Dam-Funk’s weekly L.A. party, as well as various internet-distributed DJ mixes, Dam has been hailed

as the “ambassador” of the style.

“The sound of boogie is basically post-disco,” Dam says. “It’s not disco like the Bee Gees, not quite P-Funk, but right in between, with synthesizers and thumping basslines and melodic chords. The beat was mostly on the one and two, which made it easier for skating. Boogie slows down a little, to that tempo where you can, like, ride to it.”

The term, which has spread as demand for the records has grown on eBay, was actually coined by U.K. deejays Norman Jay and Dez Parkes. “They were turning people on to the sound in the late ’80s and early ’90s,” Dam informs. “When Soul II Soul, Lisa Stansfield, and all the U.K. street soul came out, they were listening to Prelude Records and groups like Change.”

While Dam says he embraces the “ambassador of boogie” title, he points out that others bestowed it upon him and prefers to identify his sound as “modern funk.”

Indeed, *Toeachizown*’s more complex tracks—like the woozy “Brookside Park” or “Mobbin’ Through Busters,” with its Dilla-esque offbeat drum pattern—might not work on the floor at Funkmosphere. “When I play selector, I’m sharing my influences,” Dam says. “But I’m not trying to duplicate D-Train on my records. I’m just staying true to the funk.”

L.A., L.A.

Now in his late ’30s, Dam is of the same generation as G-funk architects like DJ Quik and Ice Cube, and the sound of P-Funk resonated deeply with him as well. “George [Clinton]’s ideology always had a science-fiction element,” he says. “All my life, I’ve had experiences that kind of connected me to things like that.”

Instead of jumping headfirst into rap next, Dam took a detour into metal. “Funk is in my blood, but my first concert was KISS and Mötley Crüe. I had gigantic Iron Maiden posters on my wall. If the cover looked interesting,





"MY GOAL IS TO GIVE THE KARMIC ENERGY BACK TO THE ARTIST

WHO MIGHT BE A TEACHER NOW, OR STILL CHUGGING AWAY IN A BASEMENT."



I'd buy it. I never forgot about the funk, I just needed to look harder. I started getting into the weird Prince knockoffs that came out on independent labels. I'd ride my bike looking for record stores with my Walkman on, listening to the entire *Hemispheres* album by Rush. I'd come home and just go on a journey, man... with my wax."

In high school, Dam, who had learned to play drums and keys as a kid, bought his first LinnDrum drum machine and began crafting homemade recordings using the pause-tape method. A chance meeting with Leon Sylvers, the former leader of '70s funk family The Sylvers and a producer of key early '80s electro-funk records by Shalamar and The Whispers, led to session gigs—including an aborted early '90s Milli Vanilli comeback project.

"I went to Reno with them and we had a ball," Dam recalls. "But eventually Leon was like, 'Man, I'm not fucking with these people,' so we left. It was a learning experience but I'm glad I didn't do anything with Milli Vanilli. I still have old crazy cassettes of me jamming in the studio and here comes [deceased Milli Vanilli member] Rob [Pilatus] running in like, 'Yeah, that's the one.'"

Dam would get more session work playing keys on late-'90s gangsta rap recordings by artists like MC Eiht and Westside Connection. "One thing about the G-Funk era was the producers would actually get cats like myself to replicate the sounds. I never had problems with those cats. But, coming home one night, I decided I didn't need to [deal] with 25 dudes blowing bud continuously while only two people are working on the music."

NEW BIRTH

Dam says he started the Funkmosphere night, initially called 1983, out of necessity. Despite L.A.'s deep electro-funk roots, he says he couldn't hear the music anywhere unless it was being sampled through gangster rap.

"In the early 2000s, you didn't hear anything like D-Train or Slave in a club," Dam says. "I started DJing to share my record collection with people. We started with Luther, Slave, Prince. But now we've gone into

discovering new 45s nobody's ever heard that some teacher made in Mississippi in '84 and pressed up on his own. My goal is to give the karmic energy back to the artist who might be a teacher now, or still chugging away in a basement. That's why I say the artist and the label name on the microphone when I DJ."

Dam might have remained a mere folk hero had he not found a brother-in-arms in Stones Throw's Peanut Butter Wolf. After bonding over their love for boogie, Wolf asked him to remix a cover of The Gap Band's "Burn Rubber" by enigmatic Stones Throw affiliate Baron Zen in 2007. The relationship became official last year with the release of the "Burgundy City" b/w "Galactic Fun" 12-inch and *Rhythm Trax Vol. 4*, the most recent installment of Stones Throw's instrumental EP series.

In true auteur fashion, Dam was the only contributor on *Toeazhizown*, from the singing on down. Working exclusively with historically accurate analog devices like the Roland Alpha Juno 1 synth and Oberheim, LinnDrum, and Electro-Harmonix drum machines, Dam constructed his tracks through an unusually laborious process.

"Dam has a really old-school way of recording," says Peanut Butter Wolf. "He records drums to a CD, then plays the CD back and adds a bassline, then plays that CD and adds the next instrument. He has to mix the song down every time and, if he messes up, he has to start from scratch. [It's] really difficult. But if it ain't broke..."

It's an often dirty-sounding approach, one that mimics the hum of a patch cord being plugged in. It's all part of the ride, Dam claims.

"The album is like going up a mountain—you're on top and then you head back down," he says. "Or you're blasting off into a space ride, then you land. We all go through peaks and valleys. Hopefully, when you drop the needle or play the iTunes file, it'll make your heart jiggle a little with emotions. Maybe sad or happy or right in between. But it's all based in the funk."

Toeazhizown is out this month on Stones Throw. myspace.com/damfunk

BOOGIE KNIGHTS

Dam-Funk isn't the only contemporary artist putting a new spin on '80s funk. Here's a look at some of his kindred spirits.

JAMES PANTS

Welcome, the 2008 debut LP by Dam's Stones Throw labelmate James "Pants" Singleton, was an homage to outsider-y regional records by an actual outsider from the musical hinterland of Spokane, WA. Working with tools like a circa '83 Roland JX-3P synth, Pants conjured classic boogie when he wanted to ("I Choose You" and his cover of Skyy's "Let's Celebrate") while also making a few excursions into deviant punk-funk and spaced-out disco.

SA-RA CREATIVE PARTNERS

This Kanye-affiliated production trio (and sometime band) might have made its name working with rappers like Pharoahe Monch and Talib Kweli but their sound is firmly rooted in cosmic funk influences like Kleer and Newcleus. The funkier thing about them, though, might be group member Taz Arnold's fashion sense, which takes a few pages from Prince's playbook.

CHIN CHIN

Chin Chin doesn't quite enter boogie territory on its recent LP, *The Flashing*. *The Fancing*, but Def Jux's first non hip-hop act is the only act on the Brooklyn soul revivalist scene (Dap-Kings, Menahan Street Band, El Michels Affair) whose sound takes a detour through the '80s. They might also be the first new band in two decades to elicit comparisons to Kool and the Gang and Earth, Wind and Fire.

CHROME0

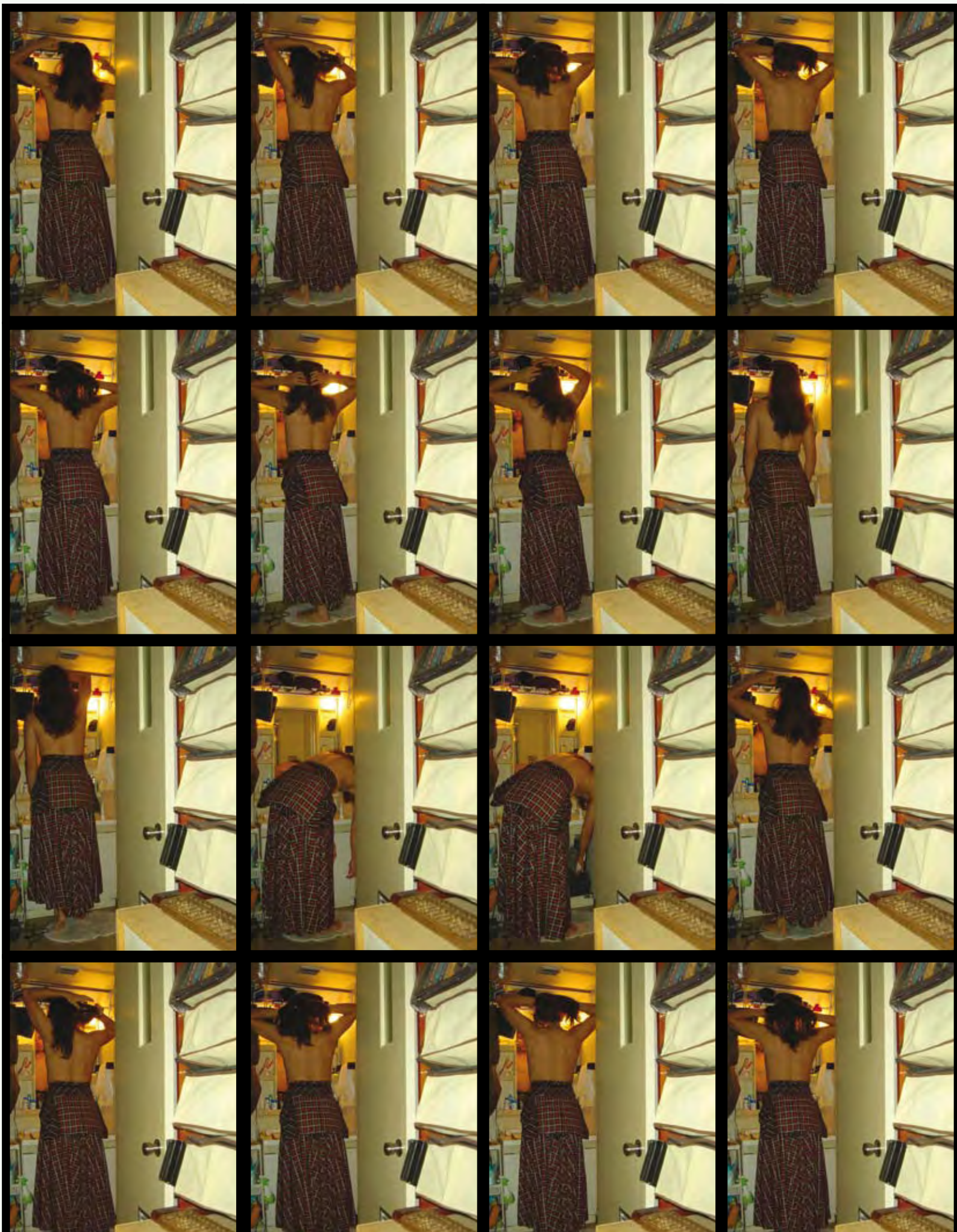
Chromeo's irreverent and cheeky take on electro-funk might strike some as parodic, but the Montreal-NYC duo is sincere in its tribute to Cameo, Zapp, and Timex Social Club, says Dam-Funk. "I give Chromeo their due because they have good songwriting, and they are keepin' 'em dancing," Dam says. "Pee Thug is real talented with vocoder techniques and Dave is a really deep cat. They definitely love the funk."



WITH HIS NEW RECORD AS **DJ SPRINKLES**, DIGITAL-MUSIC ICONOCLAST **TERRE THAEMLITZ** REFLECTS ON THE VARIOUS MEANINGS AND MYTHS OF DEEP HOUSE MUSIC.

HOUSE OF MIRRORS

WORDS [KEN TAYLOR](#) PHOTOS [TERRE THAEMLITZ](#) PHOTO ASSISTANCE [TSUJIIAIKO](#)



House isn't so much a sound as a situation.

There must be a hundred records with voice-overs asking, "What is house?" The answer is always some greeting-card bullshit about "life, love, happiness..." The House Nation likes to pretend clubs are an oasis from suffering, but suffering is in here with us. (If you can get in, that is. I think of one time in New York when they wouldn't let me into The Loft, and I could hear they were actually playing one of my records on the dancefloor at that very moment. I shit you not.)

Let's keep sight of the things you're trying to momentarily escape from. After all, it's that larger context that created the house movement and brought you here. House is not universal. House is hyper-specific: East Jersey, Loisaïda, West Village, Brooklyn—places that conjure specific beats and sounds...

Twenty years later, major distribution gives us classic house, the same way soundtracks in Vietnam War films gave us classic rock. The contexts from which the deep house sound emerged are forgotten: sexual and gender crises, transgendered sex work, black-market hormones, drug and alcohol addiction, loneliness, racism, HIV, ACT-UP, Tompkins Square Park, police brutality, queer-bashing, underpayment, unemployment, and censorship—all at 120 beats per minute.

These are the Midtown 120 Blues.

—excerpted lyrics from "Midtown 120 Intro"

The work of composer, producer, DJ, writer, educator, and provocateur Terre Thaemlitz, whose extremely varied career has spanned 20 years and about as many genres, has always taken such a forthright stance on gender- and socio-sexual politics, that sometimes it's easy to think you've got him pegged.

Just when you think Thaemlitz is telling a story about being turned away from a club (as in the excerpt above) for appearing too outside the norm—even for NYC's famously accepting-of-all-types Loft party—the gender-queer artist (who prefers either "he" or "she," while not really subscribing to either) flips the script entirely. "It wasn't about gender discrimination," says Thaemlitz from his home in Kawasaki, Japan, a suburb of Tokyo. "It was just about door policy."

Thaemlitz wasn't dressed in drag that night, and had simply left his Loft membership card at home. "They were playing 'Raw Through a Straw' when they wouldn't let me in. I told the doorwoman it was my track and she was like, 'Get the fuck out already,'" he says with a laugh.

It's moments like these that Thaemlitz looks back on with both a sense of nostalgia and befuddlement on *Midtown 120 Blues*, his first full-length album recorded under the name DJ Sprinkles, a moniker he took on when he started DJing about 20 years ago. "DJ Sprinkles has always been a signifier of the unheard DJs, un-played records, and undocumented outcasts. The unimportant," Thaemlitz explains. "Because, ultimately, I think house culture revolves around disenfranchised people attempting to construct a space in which we feel important."

GOING DEEP

Throughout *Midtown 120 Blues*, Thaemlitz examines deep house's past—and questions its present revival—through his unique lens, one that's seen myriad musical angles since he first stepped on the train from Springfield, Missouri to New York in 1986.

"It was \$50 cheaper for me to take a three-day train ride than to take a plane that would take four hours or whatever," he says. "So my parents sprung to put me on this train and I didn't even have suitcases—I had footlockers. And you also have to imagine me in this weird, faggy, New Romantic clothing, with these trunks, getting out in New York City and just pissing my pants. I was just scared shitless."

Thaemlitz went east in search of a life more accepting than what his small town had to offer—and to fulfill a scholarship at The Cooper Union School of Art—but has since become one of the most notable figures in avant-garde electronic music and art. His dozens of releases run the gamut of styles (electro-acoustic, modern classical, collage, ambient, glitch, house), and have shown up on labels like Instinct, Mille Plateaux, Mule Musiq, and his own Comatonse. Each record is extremely divergent from the next, and each swiftly lays down high-art concepts over music that's challenging and pleasant to both the ear and the mind.

HOUSE PROUD

A discography like Thaemlitz's would, to most, look like the work of a dilettante, but Thaemlitz is so skilled at nuance that he's able to both make indelible marks on these genres stylistically all while injecting powerful political statements. On 2003's *Lovebomb*, for instance, Thaemlitz deconstructed love songs and political texts, recontextualizing the meaning of love by examining how it's used in the destruction of humanity. On one track, he processed the vocals from an African National Congress speech and laid them atop a cut-up pastiche of Minnie Riperton's "Loving You." With *Fagjazz*, Thaemlitz explored everything from music-packaging language (specifically the English text that appears on Japanese and Taiwanese CD inserts) to the accepted traditions of improv jazz. (While *Fagjazz* claims to be a compilation of recordings that Thaemlitz made with the Funk Shui jazz combo, it's just him infusing electronic dance tracks with modal jazz flecks, mostly done in the least improv'd way possible.) In another unexpected turn, Thaemlitz covered Devo in the style of modern-classical piano on *Oh, No! It's Rubato*.

He's a kidder with a serious cause and a host of aliases for each (K-S.H.E., Chugga, and G.R.R.L. are just a few), but what always results from his genre-crossing is some of the most convincing music any of those styles have to offer. DJ Sprinkles' *Midtown 120 Blues* is no different, offering up a real, lyric-based history of underground deep house while delivering jackin' tracks that would fit seamlessly next to Theo Parrish or DJ Pierre (despite the fact that Thaemlitz seems to exist entirely outside of the house DJ world).

"That's the kind of distinction that I try to get people to see by producing in all the different genres that I produce in," says Thaemlitz. "That we have this one way of reading a certain genre. With dance music, there's so much about the pressure to party and to get energized. But there are many different ways and perspectives and contexts through which you can read the exact same music. [With] *Midtown 120 Blues*, there's nothing innovative, musically, about



“DJ SPRINKLES HAS ALWAYS BEEN A SIGNIFIER OF THE UNHEARD DJS,



UN-PLAYED RECORDS, AND UNDOCUMENTED OUTCASTS.” – TERRE THAEMLITZ

it. Part of the purpose of that is to show, ‘Hey, look—you can have something that kind of sounds like a classic house sound that’s coming from a completely different perspective than maybe what the standard press review or the standard label direction or the standard club-goer approach might be.’ That doesn’t in any way invalidate my experience as a house DJ... Basically, these are the things I was thinking when I was going to those clubs, that somebody else was going to just to take E or whatever, listening to the exact same music.”

THE POLITICS OF DANCING

If *Midtown 120 Blues* is about any one thing, it’s about changing perspectives and rethinking preconceived notions. On “Ball’r (Madonna-Free Zone),” a subdued, melodic instrumental bookended by recorded monologues of clubgoers and Thaemlitz himself, he explores Madonna’s misappropriation of voguing, placing it squarely in the context of gay

underground New York house. To Thaemlitz, the idea that it “*makes no difference if you’re black or white/If you’re a boy or a girl,*” solidly misses the point, and perverts the dance style’s original intentions in a way that only a mainstream artist can. In his discourse at the track’s end, Thaemlitz is unabashedly heavy-handed. A lot of his ideas throughout the record are presented this way—itsself a comment on the didacticism of old house-record vocals—but Thaemlitz’s words are far less uplifting, to be sure.

“I think that’s also part of dealing with the house nation,” he offers. “For anything to have a metaphor of nationalism, I think, opens doors to all kinds of things that a lot of the people in the house scene wouldn’t necessarily want to associate with. I think that the idea of tribalism—the idea of nationalism, as it functions within dance cultures that are ostensibly fighting for diversity—that’s the kind of hypocrisy that people don’t want to tackle. Obviously it’s an homage to those early

soliloquies on so many house albums, but it’s to do that in the context that I perceived, rather than this kind of context that’s always being shoved down our throats about, like, ‘Hey, you don’t know why you’ve been brought here, but you were brought here for this moment and this place and time.’ It’s like, ‘But where is this place? What is this moment in time? What is happening here?’”

WE BELONG TO THE NIGHT

Questioning whom house music “belongs” to is nothing new for Thaemlitz, and he explored it thoroughly on Kami-Sakunobe House Explosion’s *Routes Not Roots* album. “[The K-S.H.E.] project kind came out of this, I don’t know if I would call it a crisis, but maybe this crisis of being a white DJ playing primarily black music in a Japanese environment, where people continue to frame the music as being, like, roots music or something very black in a purist sense,” he explains.

Subtracting the mythology from the music seems to be DJ Sprinkles’ *modus operandi*, and he’s just as quick to criticize the idea of the “community” that house music purported to offer. “There was a sense of *affinity*,” he says, choosing his words carefully, “but ‘community’ is complicated because it implies something beyond simply being there. It implies a kind of camaraderie or intimacy. For me, those intimacies or those connections weren’t necessarily something that happened with people inside the club, [but] more outside of the club. Like, when I’m DJ Sprinkles, I’m almost always dressed in male drag. I don’t do it in female drag, and part of that is because of DJing these massively transsexual clubs, where people were always doing hormones and surgeries. I was totally embarrassed to come out as transgender to those people. That was something that was kind of like a corollary of being embarrassed of coming out as transgender to my boss at my day job. I feel

like if you just say, ‘Did you feel like part of the community?’ I think that implies something that is a little more harmonious than the kinds of realities that most people go through even when they feel they are a part of something.”

TEXT ME

So how does Thaemlitz try to bring together that community of isolation? It’s more than just basslines and soft pads. When you look at the texts and lyrics that augment Thaemlitz’s work, it becomes obvious that rhythms alone never stood a chance of communicating house’s supposed ideals. “I consider music as a language,” he says. “It’s like a structured form of communicating. I don’t believe that [house music] is something universal, emotional, blah, blah. We’re dealing with notes, we’re dealing with structures, and people who imagine that music is some natural thing that emerged from eternal ooze are forgetting about social process a little too much, I think. But because it doesn’t

have words inherently, that makes it vague; that makes it like poetry. There are ways in which poetry can be profound, but you need to be schooled in how to read it, and music is the same. For a lot of people, if you don’t have the luxury of being schooled in a lot of different forms of musicology and a lot of the cultural context of where things come from, it’s really something you’ve got to study. If it’s not there, then put in things to help people follow what the message is—if there is a message. And if you don’t have a message, then why did you bother releasing it?”

DJ Sprinkles’ *Midtown 120 Blues* is out now on Mule Musiq. Terre Thaemlitz’s *Dead Stock Archive*, a boxed-set of all of his work, is available now on Comatonse. comatonse.com

TRUE

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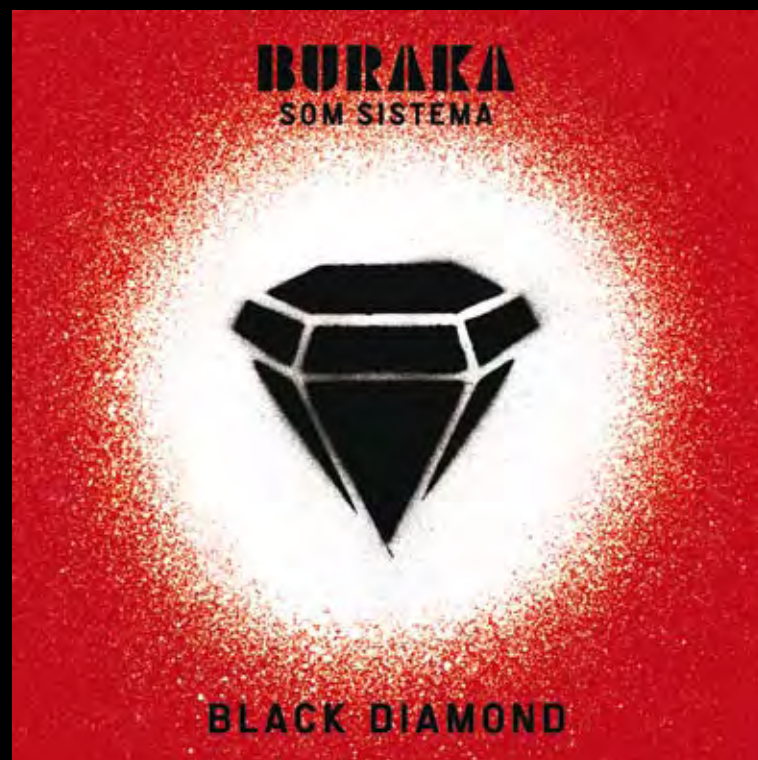
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ALBUM REVIEWS

5/09



GUI BORATTO

Take My Breath Away

Kompakt/GER/CD



THE BRAZILIAN PRODUCER
CONTINUES TO EXPLORE
THE SUNNIER SIDE
OF TECHNO ON HIS
SOPHOMORE ALBUM.

While Germany remains the center of the techno universe, Gui Boratto certainly continues to raise the question about exactly where our attention should be focused. Sure, artists like Villalobos and Luciano have previously planted the techno flag for South America, but it's the Brazilian Boratto who is doing something truly different from Europe's entrenched minimal milieu. *Take My Breath Away* is Boratto's second album, and it continues to explore the same colorful, joyous sounds that littered his widely acclaimed 2007 debut, *Chromophobia*.

Opening with the title track, Boratto quickly establishes that he hasn't grown gun-shy when it comes to making big, sonorous tunes; "Take My Breath Away" features an ebb and flow of pulsing keys over his meticulously crafted beats. That's followed by "Atomic Soda," which jacks up the intensity even further with its commanding use of fuzzy, distorted synth sounds during the song's crescendos. Audion-soundlike "Ballroom" is another stormer, working the low end of the spectrum before giving way to a warped apex that sounds like a fax machine gone haywire. In a time where artists routinely overload their tracks with similarly blown-out tones, it's incredible to hear how Boratto's music remains silky-smooth, even when the distortion knob is cranked.

Yet *Take My Breath Away* is much more than a collection of club bangers. "Colors" switches things up with a skittery breakbeat and a relaxed feel, not to mention wave after wave of shining melody. "Les Enfants" is a playful slice of leftfield electronic pop that eschews steady percussion to focus on the

interplay of a dizzying number of precisely edited synth sounds. Album closer "Godet" is a sparse, virtually beatless affair that colors a dabbling piano with the soothing hum of radio fuzz, while "Besides" is a downtempo groover that combines bubbling keys with guitar chords that wouldn't have sounded out of place on one of New Order's sunnier efforts.

The album is almost entirely instrumental, save for the stellar "No Turning Back." With vocals provided by Boratto's wife, Luciana Villanovia (who previously stepped up to the mic on *Chromophobia*'s "A Beautiful Life"), the track practically screams "future club anthem." Boratto employs her vocals in a unique fashion, compartmentalizing them into small, pastoral passages, bookended by some of the album's heaviest beats and swarming keys that almost act like some sort of guitar solo. This inversion is a refreshing change of pace, as Boratto has managed to flip the usual quiet-build-into-vocal-climax formula on its head.

Take My Breath Away is a vibrant, kaleidoscopic album, one that sounds and feels jubilant, despite its complex production and incredible attention to detail. Nevertheless, critics may note that it's more of an evolution than a revolution for Boratto, who rarely strays from the blueprint of his past work. Yet in the face of a continuing onslaught of drab, minimal offerings from his colleagues on the other side of the Atlantic, perhaps only minor tinkering was in order. Boratto has staked out his own tract of land within the techno commonwealth—he should be encouraged to keep developing it, especially if the fruit it bears continues to be this sweet. *Shawn Reynaldo*

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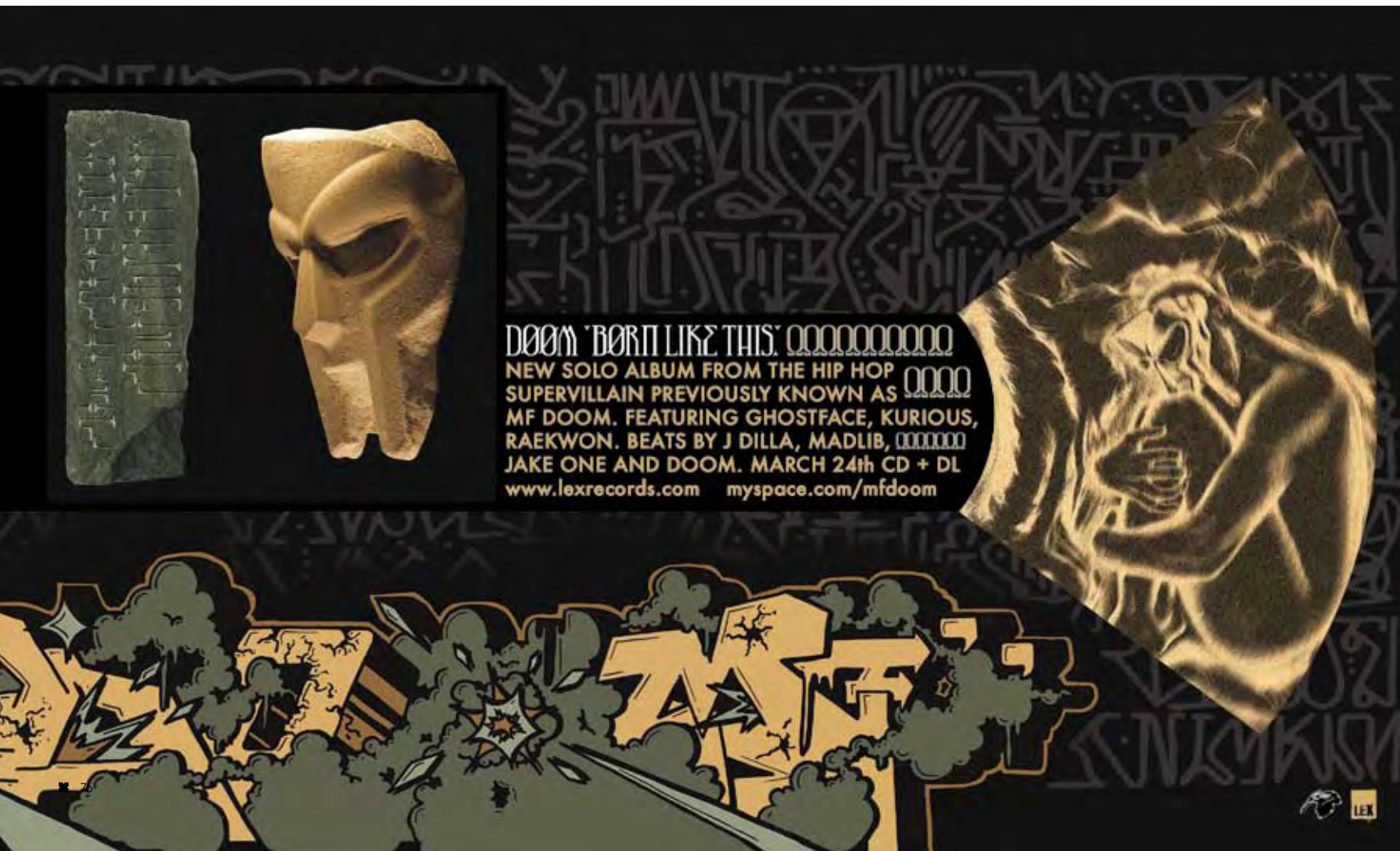




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DANIEL HAAKSMAN PRESENTS FUNK MUNDIAL

Man/GER/CD

No one flips beats like *baile* funk producers, no one spits crazy rhymes like Brazilian MCs, and no one curates a compilation better than Daniel Haaksman. A key figure in introducing the world outside of Brazil to the sound of *baile* funk, the Man Recordings boss has collected an A-list of international remixers (Crookers, Jesse Rose, Frikstailers, Stereotyp, and DJ C, among many others) and given them each a shot at reinterpreting the funk sound. The Feadz remix of “Subeu Desceu,” featuring the eight-year-old MC Wes, is a standout with its collage aesthetic, as is The Count and Sinden’s bassline rave-up “Tamborzuda” with MC Thiaguinho, and Haaksman’s own “Who’s Afraid of Rio” with MC Jennifer. The beats range from shuffle-slink to peak-hour madness, and Haaksman earns major bonus points for steering the selection away from the scene’s squeakier, shoutier vocalists. *Matt Earp*

ACEYALONE ACEYALONE & THE LONELY ONES

Understandably perturbed about the lack of doo-wop-influenced hip-hop, L.A.’s finest underground MC decided to do something about it—hence this tribute to ‘60s soul. It’s always amazing to hear Acey shoehorn words that shouldn’t fit into his verses, and *Lonely Ones* has its moments: the James Brownish “Can’t Hold Back,” the Hambone-ready “Take It to the Top,” and the ‘68 Olympics-style salute of “Power to the People.” But retro-soul generally works better if you can sing like Raphael Saadiq or Sharon Jones; maybe that’s why there were no rappers in the Motown era. Acey gets an A for effort—to go along with his usual A+ for lyricism—but overall, this seems like more of a curio than a classic. *Eric K. Arnold*

BLACKBELT ANDERSEN BLACKBELT ANDERSEN

Maybe there’s something in the water, because the list of top-flight disco producers coming out of Norway just keeps on growing—Lindstrøm, Prins Thomas, Todd Terje, and now, Blackbelt Andersen. His self-titled first outing is a sprawling affair, 70-plus minutes of smoothly crafted cosmic disco with healthy nods to classic Detroit techno and Chicago acid house. From the arpeggiated basslines of “Søndag” to the acid stabs of “Mamma” to the dense, washed-out keys of “November,” *Blackbelt Andersen* is deliberate without being boring, and danceable without being obvious. I hate to tag things with the dreaded “M” word (mature), but this is one incredibly self-assured debut album. *Shawn Reynaldo*

BOOGALOO POW WOV Soul Jazz/UK/CD

Like all the best dance crazes, boogaloo—the passionately funky, vivacious combination of soul and Latin jazz—lasted but a heartbeat on the musical scene of ‘60s America. The quality of records produced benefited from veteran jazz and soul players jumping on the bandwagon, and *Boogaloo Pow Wow* is possibly the most universally appealing comp of Funky Spanish Harlem’s ‘60s grooves since the dawn of the reissue revival. The heavy-hitters from the contemporary funk scene are here, like KAKO’s “Cool Jerk” and Manny Corchado’s floor-filler “Pow Wow.” So, too, are more jazz-oriented contributions, proving that boogaloo had the roots and experience to make a lasting musical impression during its short time in the limelight. *Justin Hopper*

BURAKA SOM SISTEMA BLACK DIAMOND

Looking for a complex, introspective album? Look elsewhere, because *Black Diamond* practically explodes out of your speakers. Powered by the high-octane beats and vibrant spirit of Angolan *kuduro*, tracks like “YAH!” “Sound of Kuduro,” and “Kalemba (Wegue-Wegue)” have been making the rounds for quite some time but still sound totally fresh. This is urgent, hard-edged music, and BSS actually spends much of their debut album moving beyond their *kuduro* roots, with “Aqui Para Vocês” featuring Brazilian *baile* funk songstress Deize Tigrona and “IC19” sounding a long-lost rave anthem. For all the hype about the emerging electronic sounds of the third world, *Black Diamond* transcends the blog noise and solidifies BSS as one of today’s most exciting dance acts. *Shawn Reynaldo*

CHELONIS R. JONES CHATTERTON

Seemingly naming his sophomore album after an English poet who poisoned himself with arsenic at the age of 17 and was only posthumously acknowledged as a genius, Chelonis R. Jones makes it explicit that he owns the creative end of the electro-house spectrum. With *Chatterton*, Jones relocates from Get Physical to Marc Rombo’s Systematic imprint but nevertheless resists neatness and functionality in favor of deliberate artiness. There are a couple of tracks here (“The Cockpit,” “Underdog Anomaly”) where Jones’ musical succinctness is reminiscent of Joy Division, but for the most part Chelonis reminds only of Chelonis. The lack of his own naïve visual art on the sleeve is a shame, though. *David Hemingway*

CLARO INTELECTO WAREHOUSE SESSIONS

Over the past three years, Manchester’s Mark Stewart (a.k.a. Claro Intelecto) has been releasing a steady stream of lovely dub techno. Last year’s *Metanarrative* floated in on a rain cloud with its lush pads, whispers, and ambient passages. Yet Stewart has also been pumping out a series of Modern Love 12” singles devoted to hard-as-nails warehouse music. This CD neatly collects those six volumes alongside one new track, documenting a love of classic techno. Though melody is largely removed from the equation, each track is a sublime crusher colored by layers of subtle funk and pummeling bass. *Warehouse Sessions* is one intense album—“New Dawn” could have soundtracked the last 15 minutes of *Terminator 2*. *Tim Saputo*

CRYPTACIZE MYTHOMANIA

When it comes to off-kilter art-pop, there are few bands more loveable than Cryptacize. *Mythomania* is the group’s second album, and it continues their exploration of unusual pop sounds and instrumentation. While Chris Cohen occasionally still cribs guitar sounds from his time in Deerhoof, Cryptacize has impressively expanded their sonic palette to include piano, keyboards, electric bass, and even autoharp. Yet even as their music becomes more complex, it remains undeniably light and cheery, due in no small part to the vocals of Nedelle Torrisi, whose chiming tones wouldn’t have sounded out of place on ‘70s AM radio. The breezy skronk of opener “Tail & Mane” is the album’s true star, but *Mythomania* is full of pleasant pop moments. *Shawn Reynaldo*

DNTEL EARLY WORKS FOR ME IF IT WORKS FOR YOU II

Plug Research/US/3CD
Dntel’s latest release, a behemoth three-disc collection, combines remastered versions of his first two albums for Pthalo with a collection of previously unreleased tracks recorded around the time of 2001’s *Life is Full of Possibilities*. While the new material reveals a few glitch and ambient pop gems (befitting his James Figurine alias), the reissues should be more interesting to fans of Jimmy Tamborello’s work with The Postal Service. With generous nods to drum & bass, 1998’s *Early Works for Me if it Works for You* backs Tamborello’s admission of being influenced by Aphex Twin and late ‘90s Warp Records artists, while 2000’s *Something Always Goes Wrong* has clear roots in IDM. *Connie Hwang*



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PHOTO JASON FRANK ROTHENBERG

BLACK DICE

Repo

Paw Tracks/US/CD

The typical trajectory of musical projects consists of gradual decline and increasing conservatism of sound, with early works proving to be the best and most adventurous. Black Dice subvert this model. A decade into their existence, they continue to wring the most grotesquely warped sounds from their gear and sculpt them into a menagerie of beastly compositions. *Repo*, like most of Black Dice's output since 2002's *Beaches & Canyons*, is an unconventionally psychedelic record, one that seems to have emerged chromosome-damaged from a bizarre lab, created solely to score your most extreme hallucinogen trips. Although it's relatively lighter in tone than past efforts, *Repo* still carries a pronounced unhinged quality. They haven't ditched their demented, funhouse-mirror effects, but they *have* tilted them at more festive angles. *Repo* could be called a party record, albeit one that leaves deep trauma on your brain. *Dave Segal*

DOOM BORN LIKE THIS

Lex/US/CD

DOOM is an MF, no question. A self-described "supervillain," his megalomania knows no bounds—luckily, neither do his rhyme skills. On *Born Like This*, the latest installment in the (now just) DOOM saga unfolds through alliterative lines laced with obscure in-jokes and superlative boasts. DOOM's legionnaires include Raekwon, Tony Starks, Empress Starhh, and Kurious, and it's a testament to the MC's openness that every verse is damn near a hip-hop quotable, like this couplet from "Ballskin": "He wears a mask so when he dons his face/ Each and every race could absorb the bass." As sublime as DOOM's lyrics are, the music is equally unpredictable, whether referencing ESG's "UFO" or new-school Dilla intros. Madvillainy, indeed. *Eric K. Arnold*

FISCHERSPOONER ENTERTAINMENT

FS Studios/US/CD

Nearly a decade removed from being tagged as the face of the electroclash movement, NY duo Fischerspooner has withstood the backlash and actually aged quite nicely. *Entertainment* is their third album, and although the over-the-top grandeur of "Emerge" may be a thing of a past, the guys still know how to craft glamorous synth-pop. "The Best Revenge" and "In a Modern World" pleasantly channel the subdued sounds of Bronski Beat and Spandau Ballet, while "Supply & Demand" adds in some Prince-style funkiness to its dancefloor vibe. Cleanly produced and bathed in glistening '80s opulence, *Entertainment* just might be Fischerspooner's best album yet—apparently the boys have learned that you don't need to get in people's faces to be fabulous. *Shawn Reynaldo*

THE GROUCH & ELIGH SAY G&E!

Legendary Music/US/CD

Left-coast luminaries The Grouch and Eligh have made a tradition of sharing wisdom and morality over mesmerizing production, so *Say G&E!*, the Living Legends' members third shot as a tag team, is a business-as-usual affair. It's loaded with substantive wordplay and laidback beats, with just enough nod factor to make necks cramp. MC Eligh also produces a majority of the album, crafting lush, somber soundscapes ("Say G&E!", "Do It Again") and upbeat jams ("All In," "Worried About the World"). Also notable is the A-list lineup of collaborators, which includes Slug waxing nostalgic over Amp Live's bouncy "BOOM!", and Blu kicking knowledge beyond his years on the Flying Lotus-produced "Old Souls." *Zoneil Maharaj*

HELIOCENTRICS & MULATU ASTATKE INSPIRATION INFORMATION

Strut/UK/CD

Teaming up with vibraphone legend Mulatu Astatke, this is only the second album from The Heliocentrics since their fantastic 2007 debut *Out There*. The snake-charmed nuances of Astatke's native Ethiopian music take a welcome melodic lead on this record, but Malcolm Catto's beastly drumming still clearly provides the foundation—the "Soul Pride" beat homage "Addis Black Widow" cracks snares that sound recorded in a 50-mile-deep bomb shelter. Yet there's more than cavernous tension here, as the opening guitar lick of "Blue Nile" is as sublime as The Heliocentrics have ever been. The approach can seem reverential at times, but it's hard to think of anyone else still finding worthy gaps to explore between hard funk and jazz. *Brandon Ivers*

HELL TEUFELSWERK

International Deejay Gigolo/GER/2CD

Veteran troublemaker DJ Hell has always produced a steady stream of sinister tunes, but few would have guessed that he could drop an opus like *Teufelswerk*. Split into two discs, the album manages to both reaffirm his mastery of post-electroclash techno and stake a proper claim to lighter parts of the sonic spectrum. *Night*, the album's first disc, is vintage Hell, full of cutting synths and driving beats, not to mention vocal turns from Bryan Ferry and a surprisingly hilarious Diddy. The album's second disc, *Day*, comes out of nowhere to deliver a chilled-out collection of airy keys and pastoral soundscapes. Apparently directing a night of debauchery isn't enough for Hell—he also wants to soundtrack the morning after. *Shawn Reynaldo*



JON HOPKINS INSIDES

Domino/US/CD

It's not often that someone who has collaborated with Coldplay graces the pages of *XLR8R*, but it helps that U.K. producer Jon Hopkins' introduction to Chris Martin and Co. came via Brian Eno, who became a fan after hearing the cinematic sounds of Hopkins' 2004 album *Contact Note*. *Insides* is his third album, and it's a stunning effort that invigorates so-called downtempo music with crunchy electronic undertones. Melodic numbers like "Vessel" and "Wire" truly soar, yet retain some real teeth with beats that recall Aphex Twin's tougher offerings. The title track is basically techy dubstep, while "Colour Eye" is a scratchy and distorted IDM workout that gives way to the serenely swirling synths of "Light Through the Veins." *Shawn Reynaldo*

OLIVER HUNTEMANN H-3

Ideal Audio/GER/2CD

Walking the line between commercial dance music and the so-called "underground" is no simple task, yet Hamburg techno veteran Oliver Huntemann continues to do it with ease. On his third solo album, Huntemann delivers a unique brand of driving, linear techno that is just as likely to be caned by big-room DJs as it is by the minimal crowd. "Rikarda" clicks and clacks along for three minutes until a huge filtered bassline suddenly takes things to a euphoric new level. Impeccably precise and littered with robotic blips and beeps, this isn't a light-hearted album by any means. *H-3* may not be a fun record, but it is the perfect accompaniment for a sweaty night of body jacking. *August Howard*

JEREMY JAY SLOW DANCE

K/US/CD

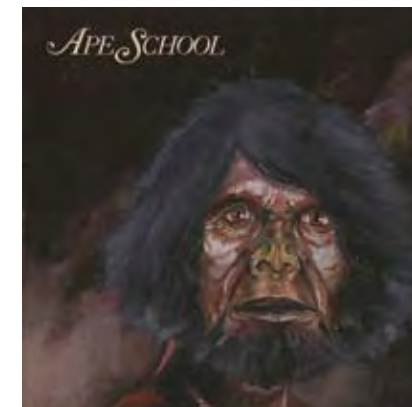
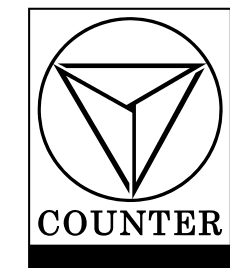
Can Jeremy Jay be any more adorable? On his second album, the Los Angeles singer/songwriter has put together another collection of catchy little songs that recall everything from squeaky-clean '50s pop to Factory Records-era post-punk. Seriously, who else could get away with pliantly delivering lyrics like "Giddyup, horsey/Giddyup"? "We Were There" features synths that wouldn't sound out of place on a Simple Minds song, while "Slow Dance" could double as the backing track to a '70s-style dream sequence. Throw in his melancholy style of speak-singing and Jay has somehow become one of the most oddly compelling pop songwriters in recent memory. Damn you, Jeremy Jay! *Shawn Reynaldo*

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Please send any additional questions about the Love Joint remix contest to remix@berealrecords.com

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PHOTO MELISSA HOSTETLER

MODERAT

Moderat

Bpitch Control/GER/CD

Given the rapid dissolution of Moderat's collaboration after the 2002 release of the *Auf Kosten der Gesundheit* EP, few expected Modeselektor and Apparatus (a.k.a. Sascha Ring) to patch things up and make a proper album. Yet a chance encounter last spring got the trio talking again and they ultimately decided to give the project another go. The resulting album is an exquisitely produced effort that finds everyone involved exploring new territory. First single "Rusty Nails" combines skittery, Burial-esque beats with probing synths and Ring's smooth vocals, a formula repeated on album closer "Out of Sight"; other vocal tracks ("Slow Match," "Sick With It") don't fare so well, *Moderat* was originally conceived as a purely instrumental record, perhaps explaining why songs like the arpeggio workout "A New Error" and the pastoral "3 Minutes Of" contain some of the album's finest moments. *August Howard*

JUNIOR BOYS BEGONE DULL CARE

Domino/US/CD
Recorded with its members on different continents—singer Jeremy Greenspan in Ontario and programmer Matthew Didemus in Berlin—sophisticated electro-pop duo Junior Boys' third outing initially feels handicapped by that distance. *Begone Dull Care* lacks the immediacy and hooks of previous standouts "Birthday" and "In the Morning" and seems sluggish despite its short length. Yet successive spins reveal a nuanced grower. What at first sounded lethargic is simply elongated and more delicately detailed. Opener "Parallel Lines" and "Sneak a Picture"—with its sparkly synths and deliberate bass—best showcase the Boys' ability to succeed in this looser format. This isn't the album you expected from them, but it's as elegant as anything they've done to this point. *Joe Colly*

LADY SOVEREIGN JIGSAW

Midget/UK/CD
While some of her early singles like "Random" and "Ch-Ching" could be called as grime, London's Lady Sovereign never gained full acceptance from the scene that the media desperately wanted her to be a part of. On her sophomore album, *Jigsaw*, Sov ignores expectations, only sticking to one constant—making pop-friendly music. The LP is by no means flawless, especially with lazily delivered tracks like the club-targeted "Bang Bang" and "I Got the Goods." Still, this feisty rhymers embraces her accessible brand of quirkiness on the bouncy, Cure-sampling "So Human" and the reflective hip-hop cut "Guitar." Even without nailing every number, Lady Sovereign is arguably moving in the right direction. *Max Herman*

MEANDERTHALS DESIRE LINES

Smalltown Supersound/NOR/CD
Marrying spacious, epic dance production with mellow guitars and taut rhythms, this collaboration between London's influential Idjut Boys and Oslo's Rune Lindbæk creates an airy sound that's both tranquil and richly layered. Opener "Kunst or Ars"—a blend of steel drums, guitar, and wood blocks—is the space-disco driving song of the year. Acoustic squeaks and echoing riffs unfurl across "Desire Lines," which ends on a synth line Ludovic Navarre would love, while "Collective Fetish" settles into gentle tones, rippling across time. As the title of this collaboration suggests, this music is unconcerned with speed and direction, instead taking a blissful, steady, and spaced-out approach to disco. *Patrick Sisson*

MR. LIF I HEARD IT TODAY

Bloodbot Tactical Enterprises/US/CD
Unflinching MC Mr. Lif isn't one to disappoint with his ever-challenging hip-hop. But what makes *I Heard It Today* his best work yet is that the Philly-based artist has found a way to write from a more relatable position. Instead of focusing his energy on verbally lashing corrupt authority figures, he reaches out to the people, sharing their stories of hardship. On the standout "What About Us?," Lif gives those who can barely afford bus fare a voice while not forgetting to stick it



to smug CEOs. And taking a break from working with El-P actually benefits him, as the melodic beats crafted by producers like J-Zone, Edan, and Headnodic are the perfect pairing for Lif's selfless lyricism. *Max Herman*

MSTRKRFT FIST OF GOD

Dim Mak Downtown/US/CD
Sometimes "bad" just isn't strong enough. *Fist of God* is one of those albums that should be known as "dangerously bad." Three years removed from their respectable debut, *The Looks*, Jesse Keeler and Al-P should have been able to come up with more than a warmed-over collection of jock-friendly, fist-pumping Justice and Daft Punk retreads with all the subtlety of your favorite nu-metal anthem. The parade of awful guest vocals does little to help their cause, as Lil' Mo, N.O.R.E., and John Legend (I'm just as confused as you are) serve up one insipid offering after another. They even found a way to make Ghostface Killah sound trite—that takes special skill. Avoid at all costs. *Shawn Reynaldo*

NOMO INVISIBLE CITIES

Ubiquity/US/CD
Dumpster diving pays. Producer Warren Defever (of His Name is Alive) used street-sweeper tunes and donated hardwood scraps to create *kalimbas* used throughout this sister album to last year's *Ghost Rock*. While the word funk often conjures up images of Daptone-style revivalism, Nomo requires an adjustment of definitions. Yes, Nomo is funky—check their Afrobeat-inspired groove and tight horns—but they've got the experimentation of electronic music and the exploratory restlessness of jazz, creating an unfolding sense of discovery. There's broad range here, with tracks leaning toward jazz ("Invisible Cities"), funk ("Waiting"), and just plain loveliness (the flute-laced "Crescent"), although it's fair to say that no song here is simply one thing. Scraps, fashioned into something much more. *Luciana Lopez*

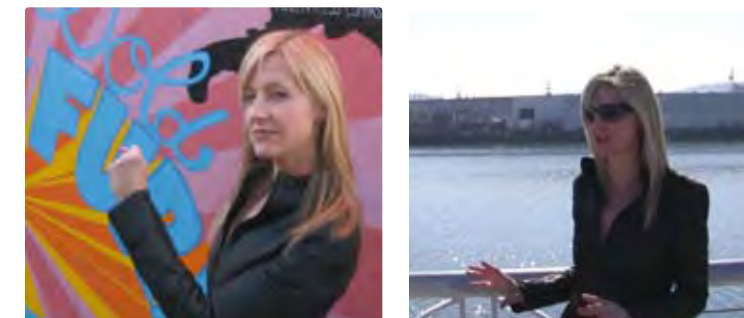
PEACHES I FEEL CREAM

XL/US/CD
After years of simultaneously shocking and delighting listeners with her foul mouth, oversexed imagination, and raw electro beats, perhaps even Peaches has grown a little bored with her shtick. Sure, *I Feel Cream* has plenty of profane dancefloor workouts, but the album also features a few creative left turns that are

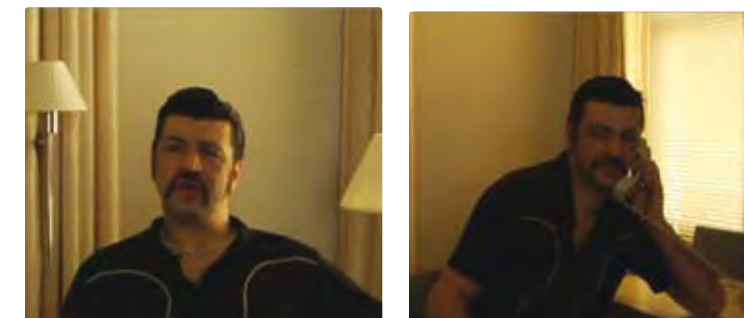
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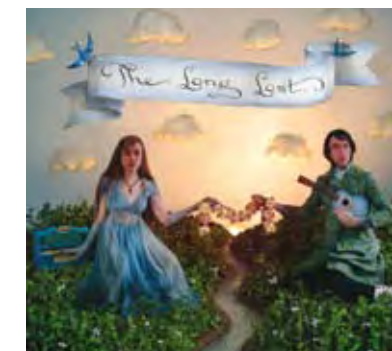


Episode 100
Arnaud Rebotini's analog killers



Episode 103
Andrew Jeffrey Wright

ninja tune



THE LONG LOST
★★★★★
★★★★
★★★★
★★★★



THE GEMISTS
JOIN THE Q
★★★★★
★★★★
★★★★
★★★



GHISLAIN POIRIER
SOCA SOUND SYSTEM
★★★★★
★★★★
★★★★



SHUTTLE
ROTTEN GUTS FT.
CADENCE WEAPON
★★★★★
★★★★
★★★★
★★★★

COMING SOON

★★★★★
★★★★★
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MARTYN

Great Lengths

3024/US/CD

On *Great Lengths*, Martyn displays a unique ability to melt down the best bits of electronic music and pour it all into his own molds. What's forged is a classic album with elements of early dubstep, Detroit techno, and U.K. funky. Tracks like "Little Things" and "Elden St." flow in such an organic way that it simply doesn't matter whether or not they fit into a neatly defined genre—there are too many subterranean basslines and hazy tropical melodies to get lost in, as the songs are as deep and dubby as they are infectious. On top of 12 brand-new cuts, the album includes reasserted versions of songs like "Natural Selection," 2008's monster hit that found its way into the record boxes of everyone from Marcel Dettman to Kode9. By encapsulating the zeitgeist of forward-looking electronic music in a completely listenable album, *Great Lengths* achieves something truly special in the pantheon of dance music. *Tim Saputo*

far more interesting. The bluesy stomp of "Talk to Me" recalls Beth Ditto of The Gossip, while Peaches goes Italo and actually sings on "Lose You." Hip-hop dalliance "Billionaire" may be cringe-inducing, but at least she's trying new things. When it works, as it does during her diva turn on the surprisingly rave-flavored title track, it brings hope that Peaches may be more than a one-trick pony. *Shawn Reynaldo*

STARKEY STARKBASS

Lo Dubs/US/CD

Starkey's productions brilliantly ride the jagged line between hip-hop, grime, and dubstep, so it's exciting to get a glimpse of the musical peers he thinks are creating similar sounds. The mix is packed with crazy blipped-out synths, over-the-top crashing wobble effects, maddeningly complex beats, and a nearly endless supply of relentless, manic energy. Listen closely and you can pick out the differences between Raffertie's teeth-rattling tweak-outs, BD1982's dubbier productions, and Wonder's straight rawness, but the breakneck pace may leave you disoriented. As long as you can handle the ride, *Starkbass* is a superb mix. *Matt Earp*

STIMMING REFLECTIONS

Dynamic/GER/CD

After he dropped a series of well-received singles and EPs in recent years, expectations are high for the debut album from German producer Martin Stimming. *Reflections* is certainly a finely produced record, one that tastefully blurs the lines between house and techno and seamlessly incorporates live instrumentation and field recordings. Yet no amount of technical prowess can alter the fact that *Reflections* is just a tad dull. Restraint is well and good, and one wouldn't expect Stimming to deliver an album full of bangers, but only one track—"The Beauty"—could even be described as lively. While dubby offerings like "Song for Isabelle" and "Fruits of Life" hint at greatness, the album ultimately suffers from too much navel gazing. *Shawn Reynaldo*

THE BLACK DOG FURTHER VEXATIONS

Soma/UK/CD

Here, The Black Dog—Ken Downie and Richard and Martin Dust—contrast the worldwide thrill of festival tours with a paranoid response to Britain's surveillance

culture. "Dada Mindstab" accelerates on ratcheting percussion and wobbly bass while sonar beeps and dimly heard chants evoke authorities at the door. The leaping major keys and 909 hi-hats of "CCTV Nation" urge fist-in-the-air dancing, even as the title insists that the physical freedom of rave culture is as long gone as the days of boarding airplanes without doffing one's shoes. The three-part "Northern Electronic Soul" moves from icy arpeggios to soaring, interlocked pads and back down again in a lament for hopes yet to be dashed. *Rob Geary*

THE JUAN MACLEAN THE FUTURE WILL COME

DFA/US/CD

Last year's "Happy House" single hinted that great things were on the way from The Juan MacLean, but *The Future Will Come* is simply stellar. On its sophomore album, the NYC outfit has created a near-perfect synthesis of disco, electro, and classic house. From the synth arpeggio and cosmic swirl of "The Simple Life" to the vocoder-powered stomp of "A New Bot" to the acid-tinged workout of "No Time," the album is impeccably produced and bursting with dancefloor-ready tunes. *The Future Will Come* also finds Nancy Whang stepping into a starring role and basically assuming lead vocal duties—she's especially strong on "One Day," a boy/girl duet where her voice slides in nicely between the song's urgent thump and string flourishes. *Shawn Reynaldo*

THE LONG LOST THE LONG LOST

Ninja Tune/UK/CD

Well, this is certainly unexpected. The Long Lost is a collaboration between Alfred Darlington (better known as experimental beatmaker Daedelus) and his wife Laura. The project has little or nothing to do electronic noodling or forward-thinking hip-hop—the Darlingtons make light and airy orchestral pop that owes a greater debt to Caetano Veloso than Coldcut. Daedelus really takes a back seat here, ceding center stage to Laura's delicately cooing vocals and instead focusing on the album's surprisingly organic compositions—acoustic guitar, percussion that barely rises above a whisper, and wafting flute melodies abound. While *The Long Lost* may not be a groundbreaking effort, it's unquestionably a pleasant listen. Apparently, Daedelus can genre-hop just as nimbly as he can juggle beats. *August Howard*

THUNDERHEIST THUNDERHEIST

Big Dada/UK/CD

With a name like Thunderheist, you'd better come big or not at all. This Canadian electro/raunch-rap duo has already made some noise with the angular, pulsing "Jerk It" and the relentless dancefloor driver "Nothing2Step2," but the album doesn't pack the same punch as those early buzzed-about tracks. Too much of this feels done already, in some cases by Thunderheist themselves, considering how little range they show here—low-end buzzing and languid vocals are around every turn. "Bubblegum" never aspires to be much more than its title suggests, and "Space Cowboy," with its repeated up-and-down runs, is just flat-out annoying. There are good moments here, but not quite enough to give this album the thunder it needed. *Luciana Lopez*

TWO FINGERS TWO FINGERS

Paper Bag/CAN/CD

This debut from Brazilian icon Amon Tobin and collaborator Joe "Doubleclick" Chapman takes psych hip-hop one step forward. A quick listen could prompt suspicions that the duo scanned the Cliff Notes for Timbaland, but the acid-melted percussion and fluid rhythms recall Tobin's '00 masterwork, *Supermodified*. "What You Know"'s clanging Middle Eastern beats resemble those of the Tobin oldie, "Saboteur," while the closer, "Moth Rhythm," is electro-fried funk at its galactic best. Yet the album's true centerpiece is MC Sway, a North London rapper whose deft vocal acrobatics occasionally slip words off his tongue faster than the mind can process them, as heard on "Not Perfect." Two Fingers just might be taking hip-hop into the '10s. *Cameron Macdonald*

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ARTISTS TO WATCH



KAP BAMBINO



Bordeaux, France

Twenty years ago, who would have guessed that Nintendo would become such an important musical influence? From Crystal Castles to The Advantage, countless bands are putting the bleeps and bloops of old-school videogames to use on the dancefloor. Add France's Kap Bambino to the list, as the boy/girl duo of Orion Bouvier and Caroline Martial makes raw-edged, hyperactive, and gothy electro-punk songs that recall the kinetic '80s pop of Devo and Adam Ant, the vocal calisthenics of Kim Wilde and Missing Persons, and childhood trips to the local arcade. The pair also runs its own label, Wwilko Recordings, which released KB's sold-out debut album, *Zero Life, Night Vision*. The follow-up is set to drop any day now.

myspace.com/kapbambino

TECHNO GUEST REVIEWS: CLARO INTELECTO



Manchester native Mark Stewart (a.k.a. Claro Intellecto) has been a force to be reckoned with in the electro and techno worlds ever since the AI imprint issued his *Peace of Mind 12"* debut in 2003. Drawing inspiration from Detroit techno and vintage Replex productions, Stewart first sharpened his claws in the IDM genre before turning his sights on a more club-oriented sound in 2005 with his jump to the Modern Love label. There seems to be no end in sight for the prolific Stewart, as he's released a bundle of Warehouse Sessions LPs for the label over the years—the latest arriving this past January—and has remixed a handful of tracks for the Hardfloor, Lux Nigra, and Ministry of Sound crews as well. Here's what has been catching Stewart's ear lately. *Chris Sabbath*

claro-intelecto.com

SHED SURGEON/MARTYN REMIXES

Ostgut Ton/GER/12

This is a dream remix package really, with Surgeon keeping it predictably fierce and complex in the best possible way, while Martyn continues to amaze with a more Amen-fuelled re-fix that sounds fast and slow at the same time. We like this one.

ROSKA ELEVATED LEVELS EP

Roska Kicks & Snares/UK/12

I haven't been entirely convinced by U.K. funky, but this 12" from last year is completely right. It's got a soca-style percussive element and is very loose rhythmically, but there's a dark, dark undercurrent that gives it an almost techno or warehouse quality. Go seek.

STP THE FALL (T++/PEVERELIST REMIXES)

Subsolo/GER/12

"The Fall" features probably the best T++ production in a while. It's good to hear him work with more chords, ably provided by STP (a.k.a. Shed). And there's a nifty remix by Peverelist on the flip to boot.

UNKNOWN THRILLER VOLUME 3

Thriller/UK/12

I love the way this series has refused to sit still. The first installment was an R&B-tinged, squashed edit and the second was a more demented Drexciyan mash-up with no set time signature. And now this third 12 gives it a mid-'80s Prince-style drum machine workout.

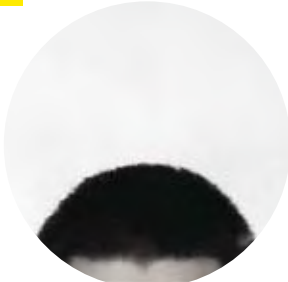


BLACK CRACKER

New York, NY

With a resume as crazy as her spacey, electro-flavored beats, NYC's Black Cracker is not your average hip-hop producer. The one-time army brat, art-school dropout, and published poet cut her teeth with sisterly avant-pop duo CocoRosie, for whom she produced tracks, DJed, and even provided a little beatboxing. Self-taught and operating out of a grimy basement studio, these days she's assembling beats for Bunny Rabbit and the Cult of Miracles (with girlfriend and MC Bunny Rabbit), Single White Female (with MC K-Swift), and Light Asylum (with Shannon Funchess of !!!).

myspace.com/celenaglenn



KASSEM MOSSE

Leipzig, Germany

Claiming to live "in a nighttime world somewhere on the edge of time," Kassem Mosse is no stranger to the nether regions of ambient techno. Through a series of celebrated singles on Mikrodisco and Workshop, Mosse has carved out a unique time-warped sound that many have tagged as too slow for traditional techno but too sparse for house. His solo work has drawn comparisons to everyone from Theo Parrish to Basic Channel, but Mosse explores the ambient portion of the musical spectrum with *Chilling to Do*, an improvised project with fellow Mikrodisco artist Mix Mup.

myspace.com/kassemmosse



CHIPMUNK

London, U.K.

Not many grime artists floss their time on the honor roll, but 18-year-old Chipmunk is not the average MC. Growing up in North London, he began MCing early—by age 16 he had already dropped a slew of mixtapes and performed a career-launching freestyle on Tim Westwood's BBC1 show (YouTube views are currently in the millions). Fresh-faced and armed with a cutting rapid-fire delivery, the fiercely independent Chipmunk refuses to sign with a major label, even as his recently released first official single, the hip-hop-flavored "Chip Diddy Chip," threatens to blast him into the mainstream.

myspace.com/chipmunkartist



STEPHEN MCGREGOR

Kingston, Jamaica

The son of veteran roots singer Freddie McGregor, 18-year-old wunderkind dancehall producer Stephen McGregor (a.k.a. Di Genius) began wandering into the studio as a small child, recording his first track at age six and ultimately teaching himself five different instruments. These days he's one of Jamaica's hottest—and youngest—dancehall producers, crafting beats for a-list artists like Mavado, Vybz Cartel, and Bounty Killer. Known for fearlessly incorporating a wild mash of sounds, his riddims—with titles like *Shadow*, *Ghetto Whiskey*, and *Red Bull & Guinness*—are taking dancehall into the future.

myspace.com/bigshipproduction1

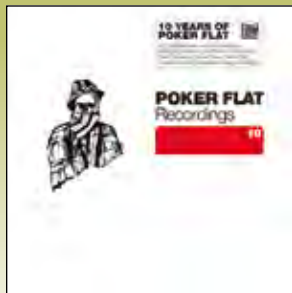
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VARIOUS ARTISTS
All In! 10 Years Of Poker Flat
2CD/3CD BOX/2LP

Poker Flat celebrates its 10th anniversary with a double CD/LP compiled by Steve Bug, featuring exclusive tracks from John Tejada & Arian Leviste, Patrick Chardronnet, Guido Schneider, Clé, and many more. Also available as a limited edition box-set containing a bonus CD, plus a uniquely-designed deck of casino-quality poker cards. *"A must-purchase for DJs and EDM fans alike."* – DJ Times



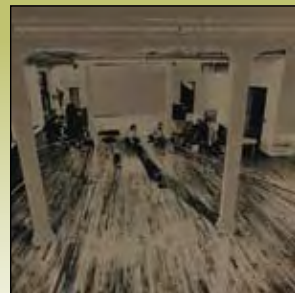
IN FLAGRANTI
Brash & Vulgar CD

Brash & Vulgar: That's what you get when **In Flagranti** comes back with a second album, an irreverent balance of sex, dirt, distortion, dance, beauty, and tongue-in-cheek humor, all wrapped up in a gritty, '70s aesthetic.



SHADOW DANCER
Golden Traxe CD/2LP

After a wave of legendary live performances alongside **Soulwax**, **The Glimmers**, and **Radioclit**, the debut full-length from this UK duo is an amazing culmination of electronica, cut-up techno, acid house, and space disco. Already loved and supported by 2manyDJs, **Modeselektor**, **A-Trak**, and more.



YOSHI WADA Earth Horns With Electronic Drone CD/3LP

The first-ever, world-premier release of this 1974 performance is a lost masterpiece of early minimalism, placing **Yoshi Wada** rightfully in the pantheon with **La Monte Young** and **Phil Niblock**. From Earth horns to electronic drones, prepare to be elevated beyond the firmament. Also available as a 3LP.



KIKI
Kaiku CD

After breathtaking remixes for **Ellen Allien**, **Tiefschwarz**, and **Andomat 3000**, **Kiki** returns with a timeless second album of dancefloor bombs, floating anthems, and jacking old school tracks. Guest artists include **MC Chela Simone** and Italian experimental quartet, **Pirica**.



MODERAT
Moderat CD/LP

Two of techno's most celebrated acts – **Modeselektor** and **Apparat (Sascha Ring)** – unite for a massive debut featuring guest appearances from **Dellé (Seeed)** and **Paul St. Hilaire**. Totally seductive, dark dance tunes that possess an almost tribal disposition for the most intense peak moments.



WISP
The Shimmering Hour CD/2LP

The legendary **Rephlex** label unleashes a vault of unreleased gems on this highly-anticipated debut full-length from **Wisp**. Melding new and old sounds of braindance and beat-driven experimentation, these are sweeping, imaginative and incredibly skilled tracks.



EL-B
The Roots Of El-B CD/2x12"

UK garage/dubstep pioneer **El-B's** (aka **Ghost**/half of **Groove Chronicles**) first retrospective pulls together all the seminal, ultra-rare white labels and remixes that had an unmistakable influence on producers like **Skream**, **Code9**, and **Burial**. Featuring guests **Simba**, **Juiceman**, and **Rolla**, and remixes of **Zed Bias** and **Brasstown**.



SPYRO
Rinse: 07 CD

The first and only mix CD from one of grime's most influential DJs races through urban anthems, bass line burners, and garage classics. Tracks from the likes of **Ruff Sqwad**, **Scratchy**, **Joker**, and **Dizzee Rascal** keep the dancefloor at boiling point.



ALEXANDER NUT
Rinse: 08 CD

A fresh face in the Rinse FM family, **Nut's** on-point and ever upfront DJ selection of hip-hop and soul records features massive tracks from **Pinch**, **Benga & Coki**, **Zombie**, **Flying Lotus**, and more.



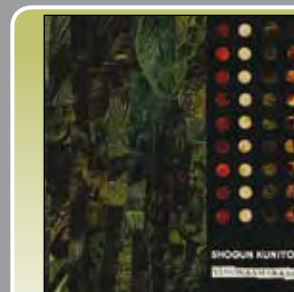
DJ HELL International Deejay Gigolos CD Eleven 2CD

DJ Hell's 2CD 2009 showcase of one of the most innovative and dedicated dance-oriented labels out there is a blend of brand new tracks and solid dancefloor hits from **DJ Pierre**, **Peter Kruder**, **I.M.B.**, **G.rizo**, **Actor One**, **Fetisch&Me**, and many more.



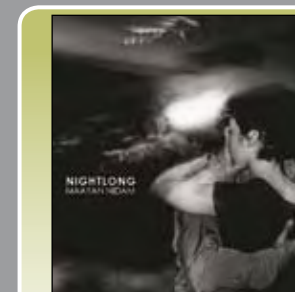
GUI BORATTO
Take My Breath Away CD/2LP+CD

Gui Boratto has risen to become one of dance music's leading authorities in providing quality music for the masses. This hotly-anticipated new full-length surpasses his critically-acclaimed debut with addictively danceable, pop-infused techno riddled with profound melody, layers of color, and ingenious hooks.



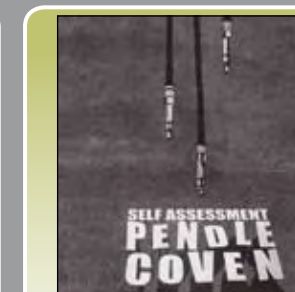
SHOGUN KUNITOKI
Vinonaamakasio CD/LP

The second album from this Finnish instrumental quartet explodes into the cosmos, sweeping the past 30 years of Krautrock, psych, prog and electronic innovation up into your expanding head-space. "Imagine **Terry Riley's A Rainbow In Curved Air** informed by **Stereolab**." – Pitchfork



MAAYAN NIDAM
Nightlong CD/2LP

Maayan Nidam (Miss Fitz, Laverne Radix, Spunky Brewster) reassembles recordings of some of the best contemporary Cuban singers and musicians, creating a spellbinding work of tropical warmth, minimal beats, and the classic Cuban voice made electronic.



PENDLE COVEN
Self Assessment CD

The long-awaited debut full-length from two of the most prolific producers on the Modern Love label is a diverse array of early '90s-style hardcore, drone, **Basic Channelisms**, **Drexciyan** electro- and warehouse minimalism. Includes 6 previously-unreleased tracks.



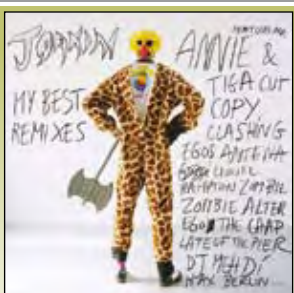
LOUDERBACH
Autumn CD/2x12"

Producer **Troy Pierce** & vocalist **Gibby Miller** draw on influences from '80s pioneers **Bauhaus**, **Coil**, and **Joy Division** to create a jump in the evolutionary cycle of minimal techno. An album that grips the attention with smoldering intensity from start to finish.



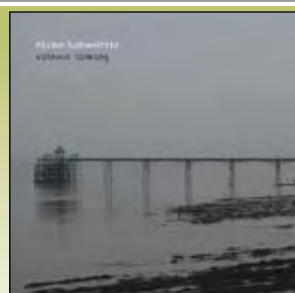
SCHAFFHÄUSER & FRIENDS
Unequal Equality CD

Mathias Schaffhäuser's collaborative work with **Ware** label staples like **Benjamin Brunn**, **Ziggy Kinder** and **Markus Güntner** results in his most homogenous and well-blended album to date – a quintessence of his work in the cosmos of minimal techno-house, and the versatile input of all involved.



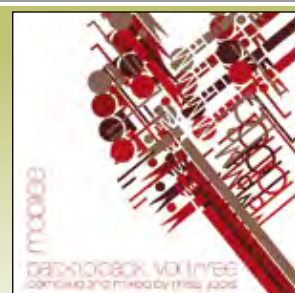
JOAKIM
My Best Remixes CD

Tigersushi label-head and progenitor of the new wave of French electronic dance music **Joakim** compiles his best, most revolutionary remixes for the likes of **Tiga**, **Alter Ego**, **Cut Copy**, and **DJ Medhi**. Distorted songs, deviant dance, and forward-thinking tweaking showcase one of the most in-demand remixers.



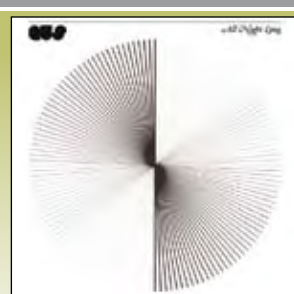
HILDUR GUDNADÓTTIR
Without Sinking CD

Touch presents a new solo release from a classically-trained Icelandic cellist who has become an essential staple in modern music composition. Known for her haunting, evocative soundscapes, as well as collaborations with **múm** and **Pan Sonic**, *Without Sinking* is a work of delicately-layered, cello-based ruminations with guest **Jóhann Jóhannsson**.



MISS JOOLS
Back To Back Vol. Three 2CD

Moblee's third installment of its compilation series collects the past year's greatest hits with an additional disc of top-notch remixes. Astoundingly danceable tracks from a label that never disappoints, featuring **Sebo K**, **And.Id**, **Pan-Pot**, **Christian Burkhardt**, **Efdemin**, and more.



VARIOUS ARTISTS
All Night Long 2CD

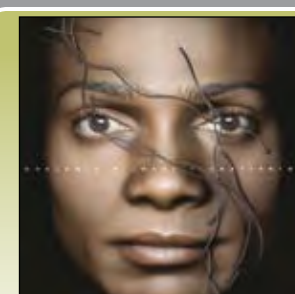
Aus Music presents a 2CD package featuring 13 new and exclusive tracks alongside a DJ mix of their back catalog by **Will Saul**. Tracks from artists like **Prins Thomas**, **Sian**, **Lee Jones**, and **Martyn** will accompany you from dusk 'til dawn.



RITORNELL
Golden Solitude CD/LP

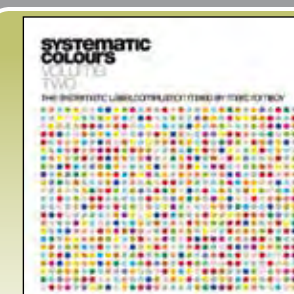
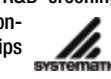
Produced by legendary leftfield electronic musician **Patrick Pulsinger**, the debut album from **Ritornell (Richard Eigner and Roman Gerold)** ranges between cheerful dance tunes and high-brow audible music. "Superb pieces of music."

–Cristian Vogel



CHELONIS R. JONES
Chatterton CD

After working with giants like **Oliver Huntemann** and **Röyksopp**, **Chelonis R. Jones** is guaranteed to confound more minds than ever. This is weird, compelling stuff: an unnerving mix of Chicago/Detroit house, R&B crooning, and pure, grinding, tension-filled German beat that rips your heart out.



MARC ROMBOY Systematic Colours Volume Two CD

Marc Romboy celebrates one of Germany's most reviewed and respected electronic labels with a diverse, 80-minute mix of label best-sellers and key collaborations from well-known electric activists **Gui Boratto**, **Stephan Bodzin**, **Dusty Kid**, **John Dahlbäck**, and more.



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ETIENNE TRON (LEFT) AND JOHAN CARLBERG

IN THE STUDIO: RADIOCLIT

A FRENCHMAN AND A SWEDE SEARCH AFRICA FOR THE PERFECT BEAT.

It's strange to call a room inside a Swedish expat's London flat a "nexus of pan-African dance music," but that's precisely what Johan Carlberg's home studio becomes in the presence of production partner Etienne Tron. As Radioclit, the duo merges elements of South African *kwaito*, Angolan *kuduro*, and *coupé décalé* from the Ivory Coast—plus Caribbean dancehall and soca, among other diasporic styles—into their own distinctive electro-tropical sound. Since coming to light through internet radio mixes and their weekly London party, Secousse, the pair has worked on label-commissioned remixes for Britney Spears and Jazmine Sullivan and produced material for Yo! Majesty, U.K. grime MC Trimski, and Bonde do Role vocalist Marina Vello. But it's their work with Malawian singer Esau Mwamaya under the name The Very Best where they've shined the brightest; an introductory 2008 mixtape found them re-imagining tracks as divergent as Architecture in Helsinki's "Heart It Races" and Cannibal Ox's "Life's III" as joyous Afro-pop. *XLRRR* caught up with Carlberg as he tended to some instrumental housecleaning and the final touches on The Very Best's upcoming LP.

XLRRR: WHAT SORT OF CHANGES ARE YOU MAKING TO YOUR STUDIO SETUP?

Johan Carlberg: I'm only gonna be in this room for another year, so I don't want to spend too much on equipment I might not be able to use in a new place. But it just doesn't sound good enough, so I'm moving everything around to get what I need, and get it sounding better. I'm selling my last synthesizers because I don't use them enough, and they take up a lot of space. Software works fine these days, so I'm just converting back to digital. And we just have a lot of African drums and ethnic instruments we've managed to collect.

SUCH AS?

Brazilian congas, African *djembe* drums, steel drums... Some *mbiras*, which is the African finger-piano thing that sounds a bit like a *kalimba*; we've got an electric one that's really cool. Also, weird little *maracas*, shakers, and small percussion things. If you watch traditional African musicians on YouTube, you'll see that they take bottle tops, pierce them in the middle and put steel strings through them, and wear them around their legs when they dance. Or they'll put them between two wooden tin things and strike them with sticks—we made our own. I had to collect bottle tops for a year but it was quick to make.

YOU'RE NOT PLAYING IT ALL BY HAND, OF COURSE... WHERE DO YOU DIG FOR DRUM SOUNDS?

We've met a lot of players from all over the world through our Secousse club night. For The Very Best's album, we had a *marimba* player from Zimbabwe come in. Or there's a songwriter we work with for more pop kind of things, and his brother is a famous street musician in London who plays on buckets. And there's field recordings we've been making when we're traveling. I really like working with samples, even though I've tried to move away from it. If you take a one-bar piece or even just a single hit from an old ethnic recording, it becomes such a small part when it's built into the rest of the music. You don't have to clear a sample like that.

ARE THERE ANY STUDIO TECHNIQUES YOU'VE PICKED UP FROM, SAY, KWAITO OR SOCA PRODUCERS, OR ANY OF THESE OTHER STYLES YOU'VE INCORPORATED INTO YOUR OWN?

Unfortunately, I don't get the pleasure to meet many of these people, so I just come to conclusions from studying and listening to the music a lot. I may experiment until I find a way, if want my drums to sound a little like somebody's drums. We like to mix and match. It's not like we're trying to make a full-blown *kuduro* track—that's not what we do. We'll take maybe a little drum pattern from that, with these other European or American influences... My biggest thing when I work is creating a mood. My studio's a bit like a jungle, there's so much plants and things in here. Music for me is really intuitive. Very seldomly will I say, "This is exactly what I want to do." I just sit down and start working.

YOU SAID YOU'RE GOING BACK DOWN TO MALAWI TO WORK WITH ESAU. DO YOU HAVE CONNECTIONS FOR STUDIOS THERE, OR ARE YOU JUST GOING TO RECORD OFF YOUR LAPTOP?

I can get in a studio in Malawi, definitely, but I might not. The Very Best album and mixtape were recorded in just a room. I quite like the chill-out vibe I get when I'm not renting a proper studio, having to work on time schedules. I like the relaxedness you get from recording at home. I'd love to record at least one song or part of one song when I'm down there somewhere in nature, at night, when you get all the sounds. Instead of putting environmental sounds on top of the track afterwards, just recording his voice with these things, all the noises around him. Stuff like that interests me more than renting a fancy studio.

myspace.com/radioclit



IN RADIOCLIT'S STUDIO, DJEMBE, MBIRA, MARACAS, ABLETON LIVE, AND PRO TOOLS.



PHOTO SHAUNA REGAN

ARTIST TIPS THE MOLE

It's probably safe to say that the forthcoming slab of wax from DJ/producer Colin de la Plante (a.k.a. The Mole), *For the Lost* (Internasjonal), will deliver some memorable dancefloor classics for 2009. The title track alone has got a spaced-out psych shimmer that'll shoot you straight into the cosmos, and once the jackhammer beat gets stomping, there's no coming down from this ethereal ride. A native of Montreal, and a favorite on imprints such as Wagon Repair, MUTEK, and Revolver, de la Plante brings the house, disco, and techno ruckus full on, while glazing his tracks with a generous helping of '80s synthesizers and drum machines. And under the Guilty Pleasures moniker, he's currently in the studio with A Silver Mt. Zion violinist Sophie Trudeau, so expect it to get even weirder. Here, The Mole fills us in on some of the toys that he's been messing around with lately. *Chris Sabbath*

1. BUCHLA 200 SERIES SYNTH

The coolest thing I used on my last album, *High as the Sky*, was my buddy Hugh's Buchla 200 series synth. He's got a nice mix of the original 200 series and the newer 200e. He lent it to me

for my 2007 MUTEK show so I could go "quad" and, of course, I sampled it while I had it. The synth itself is huge and folds in half. I still can't believe Hugh took it on the bus to bring it to my house. The oscillator is probably the nicest I've ever heard. I'm almost drooling thinking about it right now.

2. VARIOUS ECHOES AND DELAYS

The Guilty Pleasures project is really only two songs strong so far. For "Family," Sophie Trudeau brought lots of goodies to the table: The Roland Space Echo is a classic, and her SIB Echodrive tube-driven delay was also lovely. Such nice, natural distortion that went great with her violin and bass.

3. ROLAND SYSTEM 100 AND CREWMAN SYNTH MODULES

The System 100 is a pretty cool module in my collection—so deep and nice. It's amazing how different it sounds when you patch in different envelopes. Coupled with the Cwejman module's envelopes, it turns into a popping bass monster. Lately, I've

really been getting into the bell sounds you can get out of it. The harmonics ring really nicely. The Cwejman's effects themselves are so subtle and so, so psychedelic. Love these modules!

4. SHURE M44-7 STYLUS

My home needle of choice. I'm not such a good scratcher (heavy hands that move like wood!) but I still like to double-up sometimes when I'm home alone and nobody's listening. And the wood hands, they work best with a nice, heavy needle that sticks in the grooves. Along with my Technics 1200s and Rane TTM 54 workhorse of a mixer, it's a simple set-up that sounds good.

5. ROLAND SH-101

So simple and light, a friend once called it a toy. But really, if this is a toy then it is a big-boy toy, for sure. It is all over many of my tracks and live sets—from giant basses to way-up-there arpeggios and all the good stuff in between. I'm particularly in love with the built-in sequencer.

myspace.com/eslamolita

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Flying Lotus photographed by Theo Jemison

EXTREME SOUND

Photo: Adam Sella



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IN THE XONE

ALLEN & HEATH XONE:4D PROFESSIONAL DJ MIXER

An evolution of the Xone:3D, the Xone:4D is Allen & Heath's flagship installation mixer. Its core routes four analog stereo channels, a 10-in, 10-out 96-kHz/24-bit USB 2.0 interface and 227-message MIDI-control surface with dedicated maps for scrolling and skewing Native Instruments' Traktor Pro or Ableton's Live.

From the unit's new veneer—metallic black, ultraviolet-sensitive screening accompanying backlit buttons—it's obvious the Xone:4D is meant as a shining light of dark club booths. But it's also a worthy investment as a studio's dedicated beast-matching workstation. Connections include low-latency drivers (proven stable on a 2006 Core Duo MacBook Pro), RIAA preamps, RCA, SPDIF, and optical. Coupled with 105 controls split between left and right MIDI strips (dual layered with controlled pickup), the Xone:4D makes for easy control of multi-level clips, or four virtual decks plus phono/line transports (playing audio or Traktor Scratch-certified timecode).

The Xone:4D has authoritative punch, with a bracing headphone jack that literally goes to 11 (but already overcompensates at below half that). Some audio card conflicts have been reported in long sessions with certain Mac OS X set-ups, and virtual mix recording can require sacrificing a fourth deck for its stereo pair, but new drivers are constantly in development. Overall, bandwidth and headroom both seem heightened, delivering elevated effect from the sharp curve of a +/- 6dB three-band EQ with full kill. The real fun, however, comes from the new auto/tap BPM algorithms. Not only is the count consistent, but you can anchor and tweak the LFO's cutoff, adding dramatic rippling to twin VCF filter trios via eight MIDI sliders. The clock also offers MIDI start/stop for syncing external units. Combine that with plug-ins assigned to the FX return and there's a lot of customizable chaos possible. Featuring all commands front-panel accessible and generous modulation, the Xone:4D does add a new dimension to the 3D's same footprint and price. *Tony Ware*

allen-heath.com; MSRP: \$2799



KORG NANOSERIES MIDI CONTROLLERS

Those who spend time on planes and trains have surely realized that even small-size MIDI controllers are often too big for a packed rolling bag—let alone a carry-on. Enter Korg's newest line of truly miniature devices: the NanoSERIES. The NanoKONTROL has playback controls, nine sliders, and nine knobs; the NanoPAD has 12 standard MPC-style pads and a basic Kaoss-style x/y pad with hold, flim, and roll functions; and the NanoKEY is a 25-key keyboard with octave switchers and pitch/mod controls. All are USB-powered, weigh next to nothing, and are about 12 inches long. While build quality certainly leaves something to be desired, the benefit of the cheap price is that you don't need to stress too hard about breaking them. While we wish they could be daisy-chained (you'll need a USB port for each), we can see these becoming as essential a component of our travel bag as a toothbrush. *Evan Shamoon*

MSRP: \$62-\$72 each; korg.com



HOWAUDIO ABLETON LIVE 7 ONLINE TUTORIAL

From the software nut exploring every inch of his or her program's capacities, to the hardware novice curious about what the M-Box does, HowAudio.com provides comprehensive online video tutorials on a wide variety of gear. Unlike enrolling in an expensive certificate program or college-based class, or watching unreliable YouTube videos, HowAudio users choose a month-long or year-long membership and get right to work learning. A new eight-part Ableton Live 7 course, narrated by recording engineer Cliff Truesdell, teaches you how to manipulate clips, effects, and instruments, as well as how to record and edit. Each topic is broken down into bite-sized five- to 10-minute tutorials. Watching just a few videos revealed great tips on Ableton's Arpeggiator and auto-slicing drum clips. Frustratingly, you can't pause or rewind these streaming clips, only restart them. Worth it? Start with a month and see for yourself. *Tomas Palermo*

MSRP: \$19/month; howaudio.com

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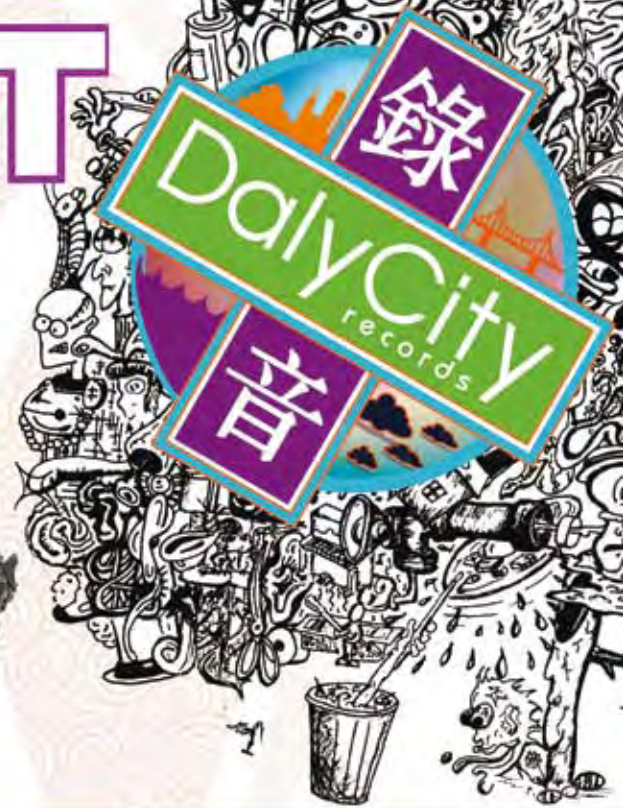
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THE HOLLYWOOD GAME

Despite a wealth of failure, movie execs continue to court the lucrative gamer market.

For nearly two decades, Hollywood has sodomized many a videogame's dignity by widely assuming that gamers were dribbling basket cases that would watch any movie even remotely associated with a popular videogame title. The failure of most of these films to be received as anything more than exploitative dreck by both critics and fans has left many out-of-touch execs scratching their hairdos.

The spectrum of terribleness runs wide—from the earnest silliness of *The Wizard and Super Mario Brothers* in the '90s to 2008's slick but forgettable *Hitman* and *Max Payne* flicks, it still seems difficult for Hollywood to get it right.

That's not to say no one has ever come close. 1995's *Mortal Kombat* actually did a good job of capturing the essence of the game's mystical storyline while retaining enough cartoony action to suck in the average moviegoer, and more recently the *Resident Evil* franchise managed to mill out three fairly successful films. And, by all indications, the Peter Jackson-produced, Neil Blomkamp-directed movie based on *Halo* looked to be fairly mindblowing based on test footage made available on the net in 2007. But, alas, movie-studio bullshit stalled the production, which, as of press time, is still in limbo.

But just because most videogame movies are garbage (half of them seemingly made by German über-scheisse peddler Uwe Boll) doesn't mean Hollywood has stopped trying. *XLR8R* takes a look at some of what the studios have cooking, for better or for worse, in the near future.

1. *Far Cry* (June 2009)

Why: This first-person shooter isn't as well known as *Halo* or *Call of Duty*, but has still managed to sell over a million copies due to its slick gameplay and bright island-hopping visuals. Oh, and the unabashed blowing up of shit.

What's up: Mysterious ex-military man Jack Carver, who now runs a charter-boat business in the South Pacific, takes a journalist to a nearby island in search of her missing uncle only to become embroiled in a secret plot to engineer super soldiers! Oh my!

Who: Directed by Uwe Boll (surprise!) this one stars Til Schweiger, heretofore known to American audiences as Heinz Hummer in *Deuce Bigalow: European Gigolo*. Schweiger will also appear in Quentin Tarantino's *Inglourious Basterds* later this year.

Chances of success: Crap director. Crap cast. Crap story. The chances of this going over well is pretty succinctly stated in the movie's title.



2. Street Fighter: The Legend of Chun-Li (Out Now)

Why: *Street Fighter* has been the biggest name in fighting games for over 20 years now, with a colorful array of characters rich in backstory and seemingly ripe for the money-grubbing.

What's up: Concert pianist Chun-Li (in the game, she's a cop...) learns martial arts real quick-like and tries to save her father from the evil business man, Bison, who has kidnapped him for his... connections? W. T. F.

Who: *Smallville*'s Kristen Kreuk stars as the large-thighed heroine along with Michael Clarke Duncan and the weird longhair from the Black Eyed Peas.

Chances of success: After the first comical attempt at a *Street Fighter* movie starring JCVD in 1994, you would think there was nowhere to go but up. You would be wrong. This one was enjoyed by few, vilified by many, and will have been forgotten by most by the time you read this.

3. Tekken (Fall 2009)

Why: Where *Street Fighter* rules in 2D fighting, *Tekken* is the big dog of 3D brawlers, and has been since the first PlayStation debuted in 1995.

What's up: This is a doozy. After WWII, the world is run by corporations instead of government, the biggest of which is the Tekken Corp. headed by evil Japanese industrialist Heihachi. In order to keep the peace, Tekken sponsors—what else?—a martial-arts tournament! Did we mention that Heihachi's son is a demon? Yeah...

Who: The biggest name is here is Cary-Hiroyuki Tagawa as Heihachi, best known for playing pretty much the same role in the *Mortal Kombat* films.

Chances of success: An overcrowded cast of nobodies fighting an evil corporation likely won't float. Director Dwight Little's experience on such shows as the *X Files* and *Millennium* gives us hope, however.

4. Prince of Persia (Summer 2010)

Why: The *Prince of Persia* series was rebooted in 2003 to much critical acclaim and has since gone on to sell millions.

What's up: A prince (of Persia) and princess (presumably also of Persia) team up to retrieve the mysterious Sands of Time, (which control... time) from an evil vizier.

Who: Blockbuster producer Jerry Bruckheimer is overseeing this one with *Harry Potter IV* director Mike Newell behind the camera. Jake Gyllenhaal stars as the titular prince with Sir Ben Kingsley taking on the role of the nasty nobleman.

Chances of Success: Based on the track record of all those involved, this one has the best shot of knocking it out the park.

5. Bioshock (Summer 2010)

Why: With its unique story, look, and gameplay, *Bioshock* became one of 2007's biggest hits, garnering several Game of the Year awards.

What's up: A mystery man survives a plane crash in the ocean near the entrance to an undersea utopia-gone-awry called Rapture, which was built by visionary scientists in the '40s. Our mystery hero must navigate the now-overrun-by-mutants Rapture and discover the truth of how he ended up there in the first place.

Who: *Pirates of the Caribbean* helmsman Gore Verbinski has teamed up with *Gladiator* scribe John Logan to bring this epic to the screen. No cast has been announced, but rumor has it that the film will appear visually similar to *300*.

Chances of success: High. The city of Rapture will be the real star of this film and will surely manage to suck in millions of fans of eye candy, which we definitely are.

ON THE HORIZON

MORE GAME-FILM COLLABOS TO WATCH OUT FOR.

Metal Gear Solid: Series creator Hideo Kojima has publicly stated that this is happening, but little is yet known about it. Christian Bale is, however, rumored for the role of Solid Snake.

Lost Planet: David Hayter, who was involved in *Watchmen* and *X Men* (and also voices Solid Snake in the *Metal Gear* series), is scribbling this one down as we speak.

God of War: This blood-and-guts tale of vengeance against the Greek Gods is ripe for the screen. A script has been submitted and *X Men*'s Brett Ratner was slated to direct at one point, but that's no longer the case.

Castlevania: Paul W.S. Anderson of *Mortal Kombat* fame will direct this tale of medieval vampire hunters.



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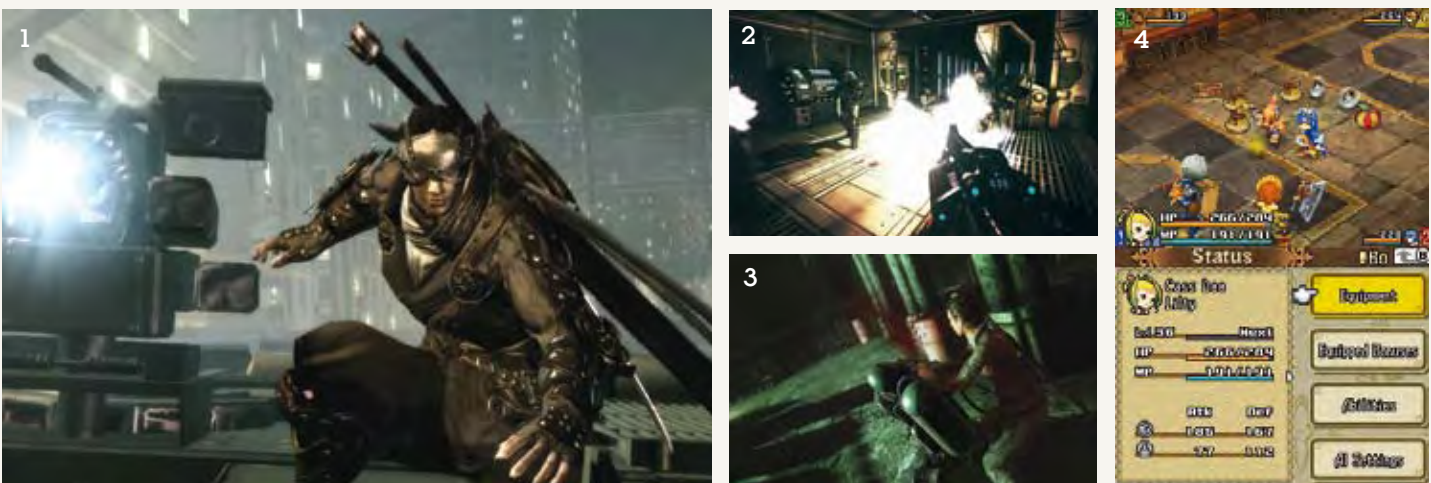
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Words Ryan Rayhill



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XLR8R picks the hottest videogames and gear of the month.



Don't know if you've heard, but times is mad tough! Furious-tough even! Unemployment is at a 26-year high. Spam is selling like gelatinous hotcakes made of mystery meat. Hell, even we've traded the cool, refreshing taste of Sapporo for a lesser, pissier dew from the Rockies. But in these hard times, will no one think of the videogames? We will!

Well, if there's one thing that makes us remember better days, it's the Hogan vs. Andre match at the Pontiac Silverdome for *Wrestlemania III* in 1987! The Slam Heard Round the World! Lucky for us, this very important point in America's history can now be recreated with *WWE Legends of Wrestlemania* (THQ; Xbox 360, PS3)! Focusing on arcade-style gameplay, *Legends* takes the biggest names of the squared circle of the past 30 years—from the Rock and Steve Austin to the Iron Sheik and "Million Dollar Man" Ted DiBiase—and allows you to relive some of the greatest matches in *Wrestlemania* history!

With the distinction of being the first simultaneous release for both of Nintendo's money-printing machines, *Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: Echoes of Time* (Square-Enix; Wii, DS) continues the series' tradition of grade-A storytelling, monster-fighting with a large-eyed protagonist, and non-finality, allowing you to incorporate your own Mii all while traversing a whimsical land in search of powerful crystals. Sounds like an average Saturday night!

Tokyo Beat Down (Atlus; DS) features a group of extreme police officers, known as Beast Cops, who must pound the pavement of Japan—and more than a few faces—after a vague threat is sent their way. Going old-school, *Tokyo Beat Down* takes your Beast Cops down the same mean streets of classic fighters like *Double Dragon* and *Final Fight*. Works for us!

Now, if you're Japan and you find yourself infected with a rapidly spreading mutant-spawning parasite, who do you call when the Beast Cops aren't available and *Godzilla* is nowhere to be found? Duh! Get a ninja! *Ninja Blade* (Microsoft; Xbox 360) sees your killer-in-training, Ken, as the last line of defense against the mutant onslaught. Luckily, even a freshman ninja is still A FUCKING NINJA, and can employ an array of weapons and techniques, from the trusty katana to the ever-efficient heart-exploding punch. Set on the current streets of Tokyo, *Ninja Blade* accurately captures just about every nook and cranny of the city as you hack and slash your way to the terrible truth!

While we question Vin Diesel's acting ability, no one can question the man's commitment to sci-fi geekdom, as this month sees the release of *Chronicles of Riddick: Assault on Dark Athena* (Xbox 360; PS3). Diesel's second Riddick title (the first, which was awesome, has actually been redone and is included with this one!) sees the titular anti-hero aboard the vessel of mercenaries who have seen fit to capture the "Most Wanted Criminal in the Universe." Bad move, dummies!

Don't you know he can see in the dark?! Don't you know he kills pretty much everyone he meets?! The humanity!

Inspired by real-life events, *Velvet Assassin* (Gamecock; Xbox 360) follows the story of a sexy British spy named Violette during World War II. Deep behind German territory, Violette must slink her way through the ranks of the Wehrmacht, stealthily offing one filthy Nazi at a time, with over 50 different kill-types, in an effort to avenge her family. Heavy shit, to be certain. (Is it just us, or when you see the word "assassin" do you just see two "asses" and an "in"? Yeah, that's how we roll.)

Did you know that the Nintendo DSi is popular? Sure! Like, nearly a billion people worldwide have the little bastard! But for Nintendo, it's apparently not popular enough because this month sees the release of a brand new version, the Nintendo DSi. See, that little "i" at the end means it's new and improved! How so? Well, for starters, the DSi has two built-in cameras, so now you can snap pictures of all the creeps on the bus and yourself at the same time all while you play Nintendo! The DSi screen is brighter than the last version of the machine and is also about 12% smaller due to the removal of the Game Boy cartridge slot. While both of these changes mean less battery life and the inability to use accessories that required the slot (like those from *Guitar Hero*), the addition of an SD memory-card slot that allows you to download and store info should hopefully assuage your fury.

1. NINJA BLADE
2. CHRONICLES OF RIDDICK: ASSAULT ON DARK ATHENA
3. VELVET ASSASSIN
4. FINAL FANTASY CRYSTAL CHRONICLES



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VIS-ED Clare Rojas

A Bay Area artist on painting ducks, penis wax, and becoming Peggy Honeywell.

Left:
Clare Rojas,
"Untitled," exclusive
for *XLR8R*, 2009

Clare Rojas' paintings are given to subverting the dominant paradigm—portraying women as strong, noble loners, animals as hard-working, and men as... naked. Okay, they're not always naked, but when they are, they can be seen frolicking in flowers, sunbathing, looking at their asses in the mirror, and parading in front of judging tables full of bored women.

Rojas wants to shed light on the way women are treated in our culture, but she does it with a sense of humor (as in *The Manipulators*, a zine and animated short with Andrew Jeffrey Wright where the pair manipulates images of fashion models with Sharpie thought bubbles and Wite-Out fart clouds). Of course, not everyone thinks it's so funny—despite the inclusion of provocative work by Terry Richardson and Ryan McGinley in the touring show *Beautiful Losers*, it was Rojas who caused an uproar with the authorities when she painted a large naked man on the side of a Cleveland building.

While her cartoon penises may be provocative, they're only a part of Rojas' art. Widely considered a part of the Mission school (along with husband Barry "Twist" McGee), Rojas draws from global folk styles in her ultra-flat 2-D fairy tales, painting joy and pain with gouache and latex on accessible materials like paper and wood. Additionally, Rojas makes music that's as quietly beguiling as her art; as Peggy Honeywell, she has released several albums of sweet, minimal folk and recently played at San Francisco's Noise Pop Festival.

Rojas is currently working on a garden journal with Chronicle Books, as well as preparing for 2009 gallery shows at New Image Art, Kavi Gupta, and Ikon Gallery. Though the San Francisco-based artist says her favorite place is "anywhere it's quiet," she allowed us to interrupt her peace long enough to ask a few choice questions.

peggyhoneywell.blogspot.com





Above:
"Untitled," 2009

XLRSR: Are the people in your paintings people you know or people who are imagined?

Clare Rojas: They are people I know, or don't but see almost everyday, and symbols, and metaphors for ideas. My work is a little bit autobiography, and about other people, too.

Your work is inspired by folk art, but are you a nostalgic person?

Folk art to me is anything intuitive. For me, it does not mean it is from the past. I don't long for the past. Why would I? I love quilts and music that tells stories. I love to tell stories, so if this is folk then fine.

When did you begin making music as Peggy Honeywell? Do you think of Peggy as a character separate from yourself?

I began playing music in 2000, I think? Gosh, I can't remember. It was when I was really depressed and working as a secretary in Philly, and painting just was not cutting it for me. I defiantly wanted to be someone other than who I was at that point, and Peggy was created. When I began, I wore a bag over my head, then it went to wigs, and now I have grown out my own hair and Clare has consumed Peggy, or vice versa, I am not sure. She is morphing into something else, something like a storyteller, and I don't need a gimmick to that. She is becoming real.



Right:
"Untitled," 2009



Left:
"Untitled," 2009



Above works
"Untitled," 2009

Who is one artist, musician, or author that has really affected you?

I think authors have affected me the most. *Backlash* by Susan Faludi was an awakening for me.

What has been your most controversial piece, and why?

I don't know if I paint anything controversial, but I can say that I have an entire collection of naked-man paintings that won't sell. I am ready to bet my life on the fact that if those were naked women, I would not have that kind of inventory. The thing is, I send the naked-man money to women's shelters or Planned Parenthood, same with my penis-shaped surf wax. So far my efforts have only been a pin drop, but I guess that's better than nothing.

About your work featuring naked men... What was the "a-ha" moment leading you to do to the first of those paintings?

Well, I guess the moment was when I got so sick and tired of walking into museums and galleries and watching all the men gaze at the naked women everywhere, and thinking, 'God, I wish they could know what that feels like, but we would have to reverse everything.' That is what I want to do, just so they know and stop. So I can do this with laughter and hope it is a remedy for our ills.

The objectification of women has become so intertwined that people don't even notice it. It's so crazy to me. The more something is perpetuated, the more normal it becomes. I, for some reason, don't have that armor everyone else seems to develop and so every time I see something sad, it's like my wound just opens up more and the pain is so great that for some reason laughter seems like the only reasonable response. It's like an out-of-body experience.



Above:
"Untitled," 2009

What sort of work were you doing as an undergrad at Rhode Island School of Design (RISD)? Does it have any bearing on what you are doing now?
 RISD was a great experience. I was in printmaking, and this medium really informed how I paint, and how I use color and layer, and the size I like. In my junior year, my mom got cancer (she is in remission and doing great); I went home to help her through treatments one summer, and needed a paint other than oils, because they stank too much. I found gouache, which was non-toxic, did not smell, and produced a look that was similar to silkscreen, which I loved. So basically I could paint like a printmaker. And the Fort Thunder [art collective] folks were doing their thing and it was a magical time, every minute was challenging to keep up with but super-inspirational.

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Right: "Untitled," 2009

What was your most difficult moment as an artist?

I guess there are so many, but I think not knowing if I am in the right place at the right time, and not being able to control my timing in being born. I guess trying to control what I can't and figuring out how to sort out and work on the issues of the world that I want to talk about without letting it all suffocate me in some deep, dark place. But I think that is just human, not only [specific to] artists.

What is your biggest fear?

I have a lot of demons, and answering this question feels like a bad idea.

What were you really into when you were 15?

When I was 15, I was drawing a lot of pastel portraits and painting oils in this senior citizens' home. They all had such great stories and I loved it. I passed history by drawing my teacher and painting him a duck.

Who is one historical figure that really resonates with you?

I really think a lot about pioneer women and what they went through, how tough they were, and I would love to talk with one. And Mary Magdalene.

For more from Clare Rojas, get thee to XLRBR.com/126extras.



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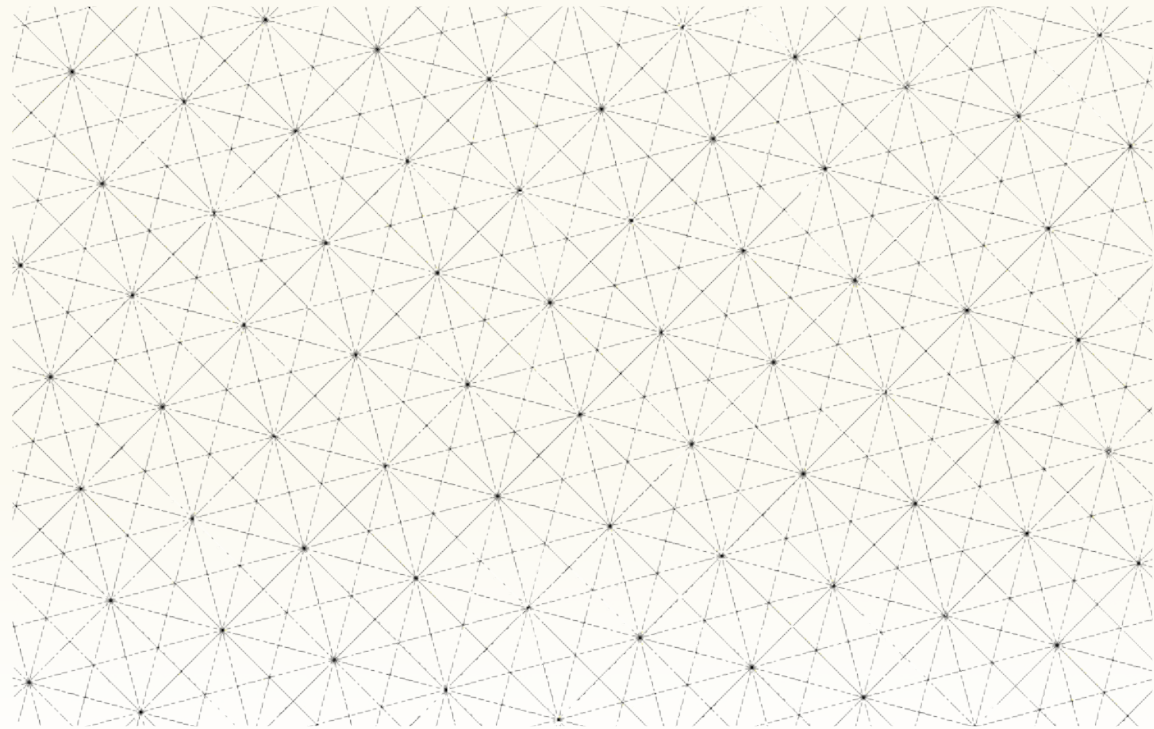
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Gridlocked

Blip composer **Carsten Nicolai** explores the beauty of staying within the lines.



Carsten Nicolai is a co-founder of Raster-Noton Archiv Fur Ton und Nichtton (Raster-Noton Archive for Sound and Non-Sound), the imprint behind the *Clear* and *20' to 2000* series. The former was an attempt to release music without anything but the music and the format it was carried on (packaged in clear casings with as little text as possible); the latter compiled a single 20-minute CD each month in the run up to the millennium. Nicolai is also a visual artist, whose sculptures, drawings, and conceptual installations have appeared around the world, including the Venice Biennale and Berlin's Neue Nationalgalerie.

His new book, *Grid Index*, is a "visual dictionary on two dimensional grids and geometric tilings" that lifts inspiration from art, architecture, and scientific papers. Sometimes austere and often beautiful, the collection feels like an "arty" visual counterpart to the minimal electronic music he records under the Noto and alva.noto monikers. We talked with Nicolai about his lexicon of patterns

and grid systems, which he describes as a functional tool, reference book, and practical resource.

XLRBR: What do you see as the function of *Grid Index*?

Carsten Nicolai: *Grid Index* was produced for myself, as an archive—a source book where I can just go and look when I'm searching for a specific grid for something like an architectural project or for design issues. I thought it should be published because it's a massive work and a beautiful collection. It's the first book, as far as I know, that tries to categorize and to make a visual example of grids. I see it as a kind of scientific publication. I hope designers, architects, and mathematicians can get some use out of it as well.

What are you saying or hoping to articulate with the book?

I hope it becomes a foundation. If you need a grid or if you want to know more about grids or make your own grids, you can use things out of this book.

Is *Grid Index* a design for living? Are such levels of order, regulation, or neatness deliberately reflected elsewhere in your life?

Um, maybe not. It's really, for me, a tool rather than a design book. It's maybe a bit confusing because Gestalten publishes many books on the edge of architecture and design and art. I like that it shares all these areas a little bit but it's much more about being a source, like the *tafelwerk* we were given at school that had all the logarithm numbers before pocket calculators, all the basic formulas that you needed to calculate things. It's a dream that everybody would want to have this book on their shelf and use it every day or every week or every month—that it becomes like a school book.

***Grid Index* is accompanied by a CD of the book's grids and patterns. What do you hope people will do with these images?**

I hope people use it. Copyright is quite flexible in that people can use it for personal use and people can create

things. I hope that this CD gives many elements to play with, to start thinking about patterns in a different way, to start a discussion about ideas of patterns, and to be aware more of how we use patterns in our daily life.

You've previously worked as a gardener. In what way has this impacted your subsequent work?

I worked as a gardener and studied landscape design, and I think this has been very influential for me. Nature is still a huge, huge inspiration. When you look at *Grid Index*, you can see that many of these patterns are basically "inside of nature." Many more complex patterns are in life organizations or inside the organization of lifeforms; they are part of the foundation of our life. Mathematics is basically a part of nature.

Grid Index is out this month via Gestalten. gestalten.com, carstennicolai.com

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